Ministry of Culture
Government of India

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

INDIA'S WOMEN UNSUNG HEROES

The Brave Women of our Freedom Struggle

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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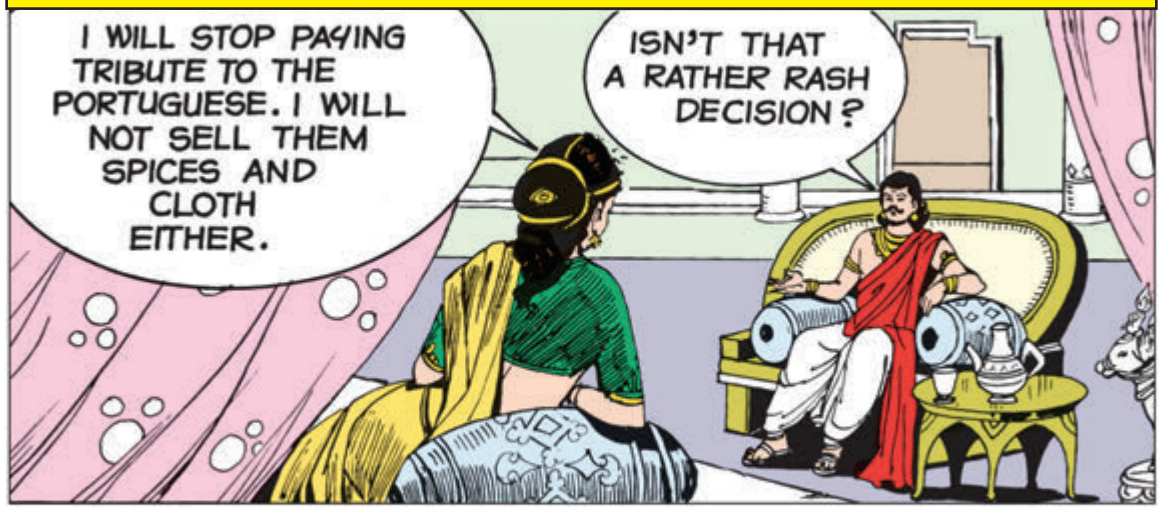
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

Rani Abbakka

AFTER THE CORONATION, ABBAKKA SPOKE TO HER HUSBAND, VEERA NARASIMHA, THE KING OF BANGADI, ABOUT HER FUTURE PLANS.



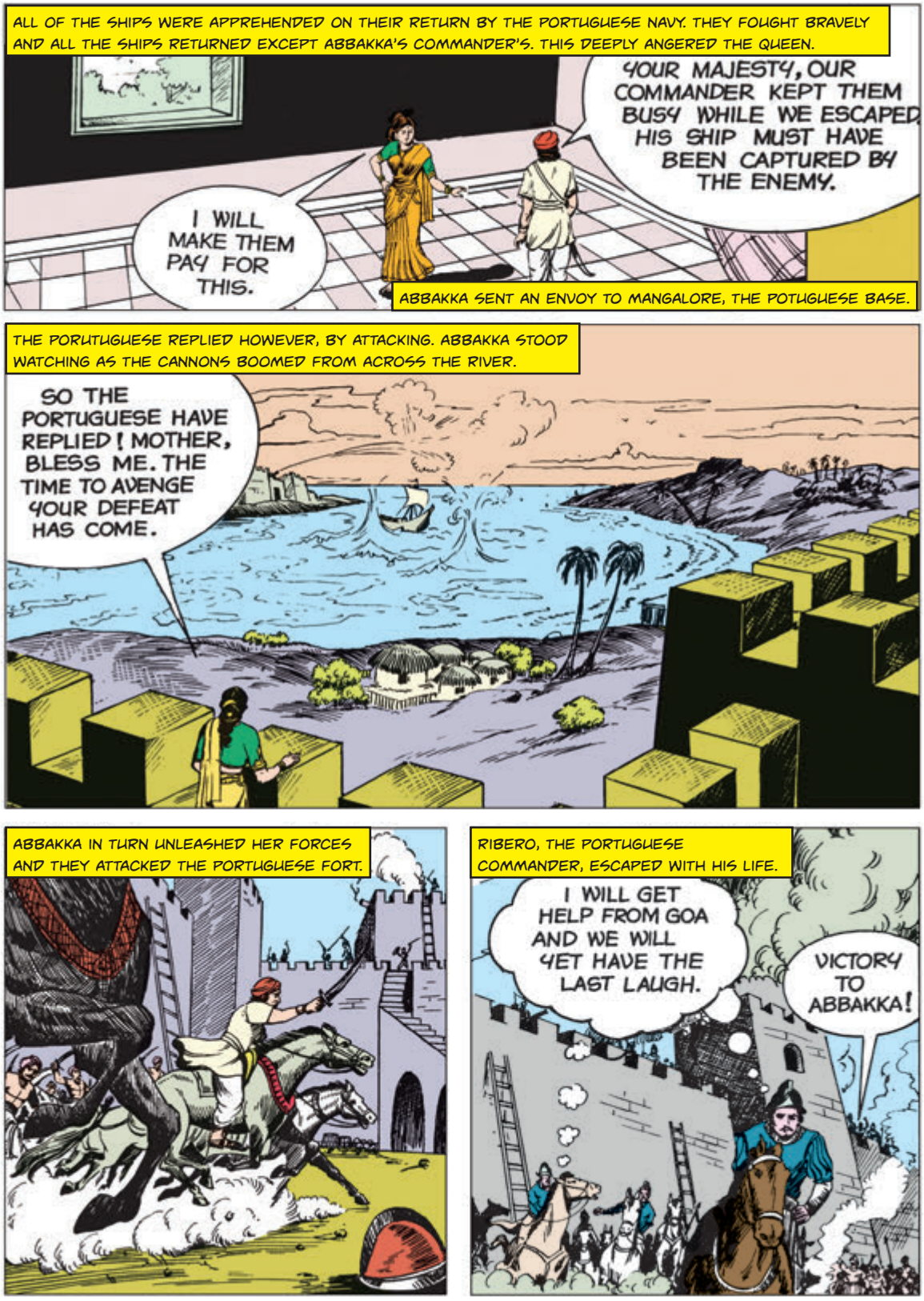
AS ABAKKA WALKED AWAY –
STOP HER! SEIZE HER!!
BUT SUCH WAS THE SPELL CAST BY THE BRAVE QUEEN, NOT A SOLDIER STIRRED. THEY DECIDED TO FOLLOW THEIR BRAVE LEADER.

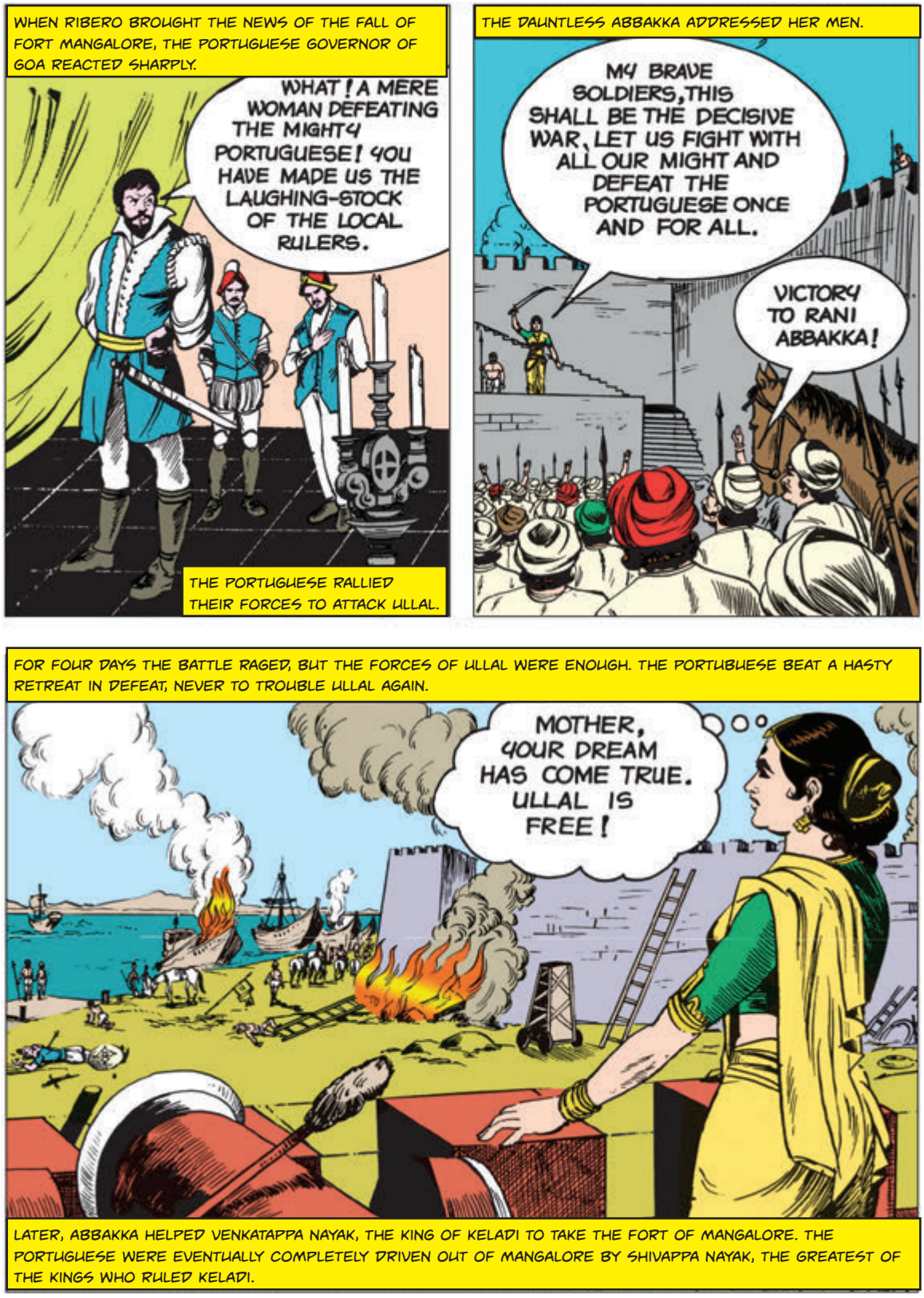
ABBAKKA ADDRESSED A MEETING OF RAJAS.
IF WE UNITE AND FIGHT, WE COULD DRIVE THE PORTUGUESE OUT OF OUR LAND.
IMPOSSIBLE! WE ARE NO MATCH FOR THEM.
I WOULD ADVISE YOU NOT TO PROVOKE THEM.

THEIR REACTIONS ONLY SERVED TO STRENGTHEN ABBAKKA'S RESOLVE.
I WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THE PORTUGUESE ALONE. FOR FIGHT THEM I WILL — SINGLE-HANDED, IF NEED BE!

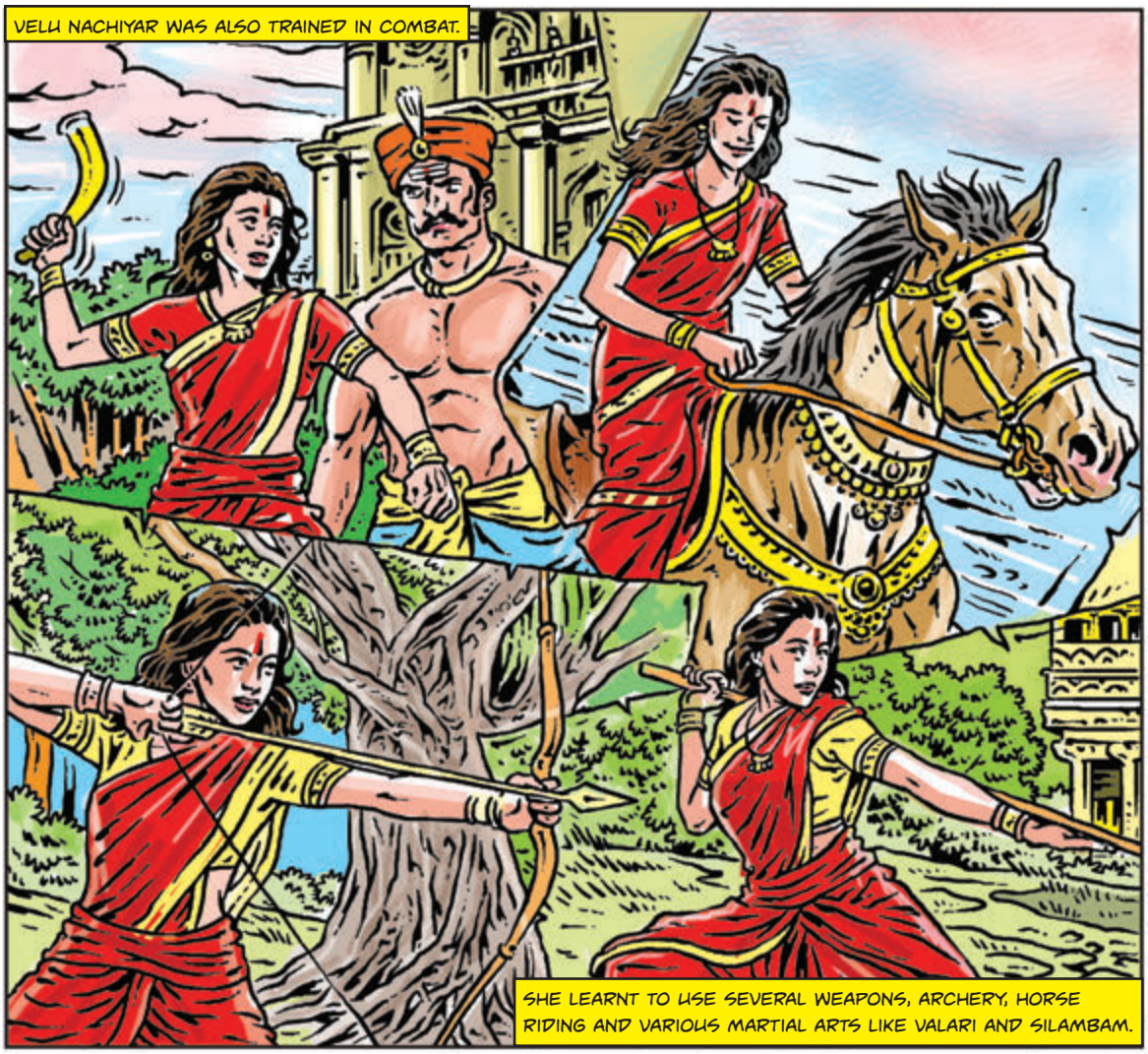
THE NEXT DAY, A PORTUGUESE ENVOY PRESENTED HIMSELF TO THE QUEEN.
OUR GOVERNOR HAS SENT ME TO REMIND YOU THAT THE ANNUAL TRIBUTE FROM ULLAL IS LONG OVERDUE. AND...

WE ARE A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY. WE DON'T PAY TRIBUTE TO PORTUGAL. AND WE DON'T TAKE ORDERS FROM THE PORTUGUESE!
YOUR MAJESTY, YOU WILL REGRET YOUR STAND.
ABBAKKA ORDERED MERCHANT SHIPS TO BE BUILT AND IN ALLIANCE WITH THE ZAMORIN OF KOZHIKODE, SHE DEFIED THE PORTUGUESE AND ESTABLISHED A HUGELY PROFITABLE TRADING RELATION WITH ARABIA.
VISIT US AGAIN, BROTHER.
GOD WILLING, WE WILL.
MOTHER, THIS IS THE BEGINNING. AND I PROMISE YOU THAT THE END WILL SOON FOLLOW.


ALL OF THE SHIPS WERE APPREHENDED ON THEIR RETURN BY THE PORTUGUESE NAVY. THEY FOUGHT BRAVELY AND ALL THE SHIPS RETURNED EXCEPT ABBAKKA'S COMMANDER'S. THIS DEEPLY ANGERED THE QUEEN.
YOUR MAJESTY, OUR COMMANDER KEPT THEM BUSY WHILE WE ESCAPED. HIS SHIP MUST HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY.
I WILL MAKE THEM PAY FOR THIS.
ABBAKKA SENT AN ENVOY TO MANGALORE, THE POTUGUESE BASE.
THE PORUTUGUESE REPLIED HOWEVER, BY ATTACKING. ABBAKKA STOOD WATCHING AS THE CANNONS BOOMED FROM ACROSS THE RIVER.
SO THE PORTUGUESE HAVE REPLIED! MOTHER, BLESS ME. THE TIME TO AVENGE YOUR DEFEAT HAS COME.
ABBAKKA IN TURN UNLEASHED HER FORCES AND THEY ATTACKED THE PORTUGUESE FORT.
RIBERO, THE PORTUGUESE COMMANDER, ESCAPED WITH HIS LIFE.
I WILL GET HELP FROM GOA AND WE WILL YET HAVE THE LAST LAUGH.
VICTORY TO ABBAKKA!

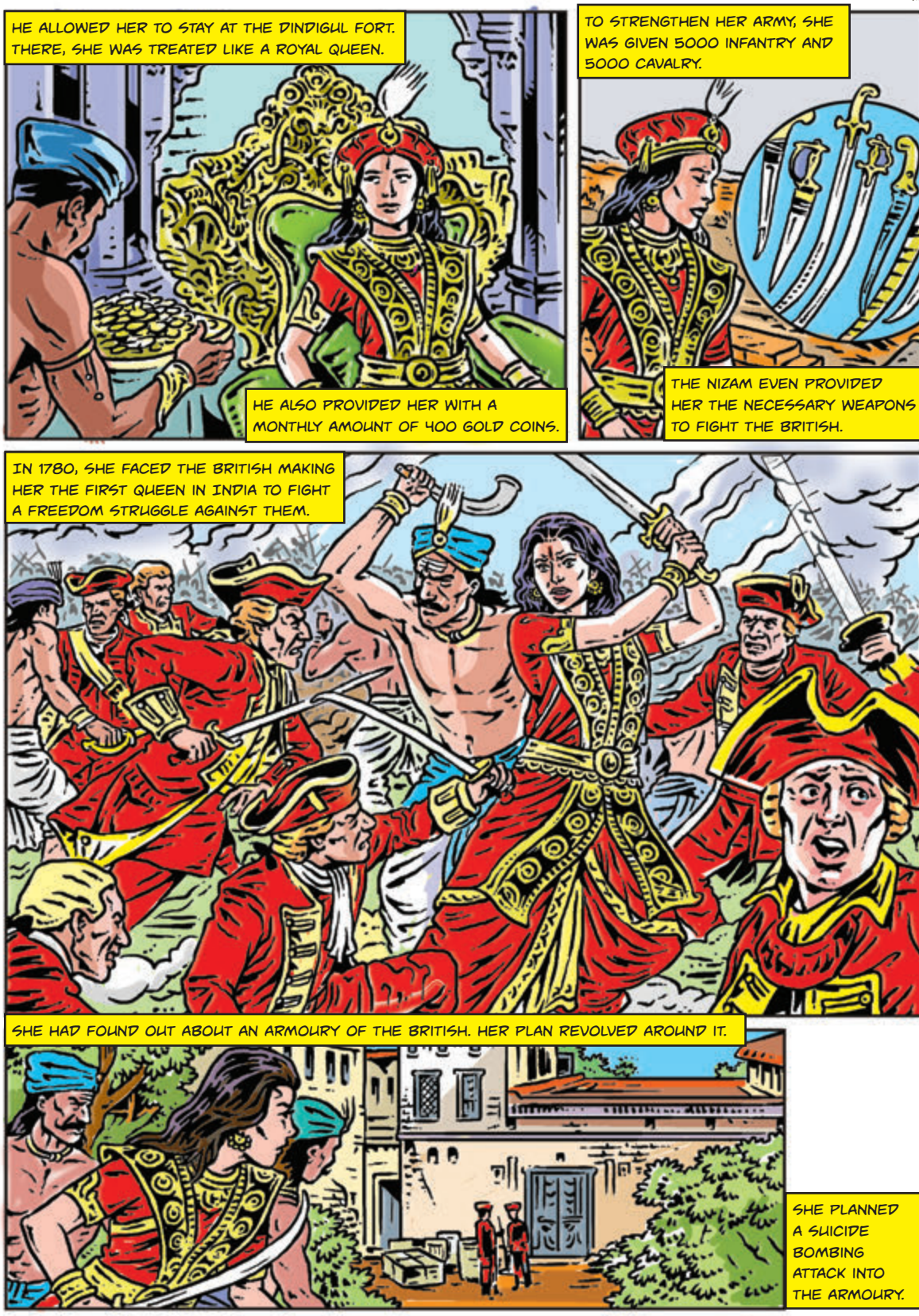

WHEN RIBERO BROUGHT THE NEWS OF THE FALL OF FORT MANGALORE, THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNOR OF GOA REACTED SHARPLY.
WHAT! A MERE WOMAN DEFEATING THE MIGHTY PORTUGUESE! YOU HAVE MADE US THE LAUGHING-STOCK OF THE LOCAL RULERS.
THE PORTUGUESE RALLIED THEIR FORCES TO ATTACK ULLAL.
THE DAUNTLESS ABBAKKA ADDRESSED HER MEN.
MY BRAVE SOLDIERS, THIS SHALL BE THE DECISIVE WAR. LET US FIGHT WITH ALL OUR MIGHT AND DEFEAT THE PORTUGUESE ONCE AND FOR ALL.
VICTORY TO RANI ABBAKKA!
FOR FOUR DAYS THE BATTLE RAGED, BUT THE FORCES OF ULLAL WERE ENOUGH. THE PORTUGUESE BEAT A HASTY RETREAT IN DEFEAT, NEVER TO TROUBLE ULLAL AGAIN.
MOTHER, YOUR DREAM HAS COME TRUE. ULLAL IS FREE!
LATER, ABBAKKA HELPED VENKATAPPA NAYAK, THE KING OF KELADI TO TAKE THE FORT OF MANGALORE. THE PORTUGUESE WERE EVENTUALLY COMPLETELY DRIVEN OUT OF MANGALORE BY SHIVAPPA NAYAK, THE GREATEST OF THE KINGS WHO RULED KELADI.

Velu Nachiyar


VELU NACHIYAR WAS ALSO TRAINED IN COMBAT.
SHE LEARNT TO USE SEVERAL WEAPONS, ARCHERY, HORSE RIDING AND VARIOUS MARTIAL ARTS LIKE VALARI AND SILAMBAM.

WHEN SHE WAS 16, SHE MARRIED THE KING MUTHUVADUGANATHAPERIYA UDAIYATHEVAR OF THE SIVAGANGAI ESTATE.
TOGETHER, THE COUPLE HAD A DAUGHTER.

IN 1772, THE SON OF THE NAWAB OF ARCOT JOINED HANDS WITH THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND INVADED SIVAGANGAI.
A BATTLE ENSUED AND KING MUTHUVADUGANANTHUR UDAIYATHEVAR WAS KILLED BY COLONEL SMITH.
VELU NACHIYAR AND HER DAUGHTER WERE DRAWN INTO THE CONFLICT. HOWEVER, SHE MANAGED TO BARELY ESCAPE.
SHE TOOK REFUGE IN VIRUPACHI NEAR DINDIGUL FOR EIGHT YEARS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF PALAYAKARAR KOPALA NAYAKKAR.
THERE, SHE PLANNED HER REVENGE BY BUILDING A POWERFUL ARMY.
SHE HAD THE SUPPORT FROM GOPALA NAYAKER BUT NEEDED MORE HELP. SO SHE WENT TO MEET HYDER ALI, THE NIZAM OF THE KINGDOM OF MYSORE.
SHE MET HIM IN DINDIGUL WHERE SHE IMPRESSED HIM WITH HER URDU.
MOREOVER, THE NIZAM TOOK NOTE OF HER COURAGE AND AGREED TO HELP HER.


HE ALLOWED HER TO STAY AT THE DINDIGUL FORT. THERE, SHE WAS TREATED LIKE A ROYAL QUEEN.
HE ALSO PROVIDED HER WITH A MONTHLY AMOUNT OF 400 GOLD COINS.
TO STRENGTHEN HER ARMY, SHE WAS GIVEN 5000 INFANTRY AND 5000 CAVALRY.
THE NIZAM EVEN PROVIDED HER THE NECESSARY WEAPONS TO FIGHT THE BRITISH.
IN 1780, SHE FACED THE BRITISH MAKING HER THE FIRST QUEEN IN INDIA TO FIGHT A FREEDOM STRUGGLE AGAINST THEM.
SHE HAD FOUND OUT ABOUT AN ARMOURY OF THE BRITISH. HER PLAN REVOLVED AROUND IT.
SHE PLANNED A SUICIDE BOMBING ATTACK INTO THE ARMOURY.

KUYILI, ANOTHER FEMALE WARRIOR IN HER ARMY, ACCEPTED THE QUEEN'S ORDERS WITH HONOUR AND CARRIED OUT THE MISSION.

SHE DRENCHED HERSELF IN GHEE, LIT HERSELF ON FIRE AND CHARGED TOWARDS THE ARMOURY THUS EFFECTIVELY BLOWING IT UP TO SMITHEREENS!

NOW EMERGING VICTORIOUS, VELU NACHIYAR MANAGED TO INHERIT HER HUSBAND'S KINGDOM AGAIN WHICH SHE RULED FOR A DECADE.

AFTER THE RESTORATION OF HER KINGDOM, VELU NACHIYAR EXPRESSED HER GRATITUDE TO NIZAM HYDER ALI BY CONSTRUCTING A MOSQUE AND CHURCH AT SARAGANI.

SHE MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH HER AND HIS SON, TIPU SULTAN.

IN 1780, SHE TOOK HELP OF THE MARUDU BROTHERS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM.

LATER, IN 1790, HER DAUGHTER, VELLACCI, INHERITED THE THRONE.

VELU NACHIYAR PASSED AWAY A FEW YEARS LATER, ON 25 DECEMBER 1796.
THE TAMILS CALLED HER VEERAMANGAI OR 'BRAVE WOMAN'.
TO HONOUR HER MEMORY, THE GOVERNMENT RELEASED A COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP IN HER NAME.
भारत
INDIA
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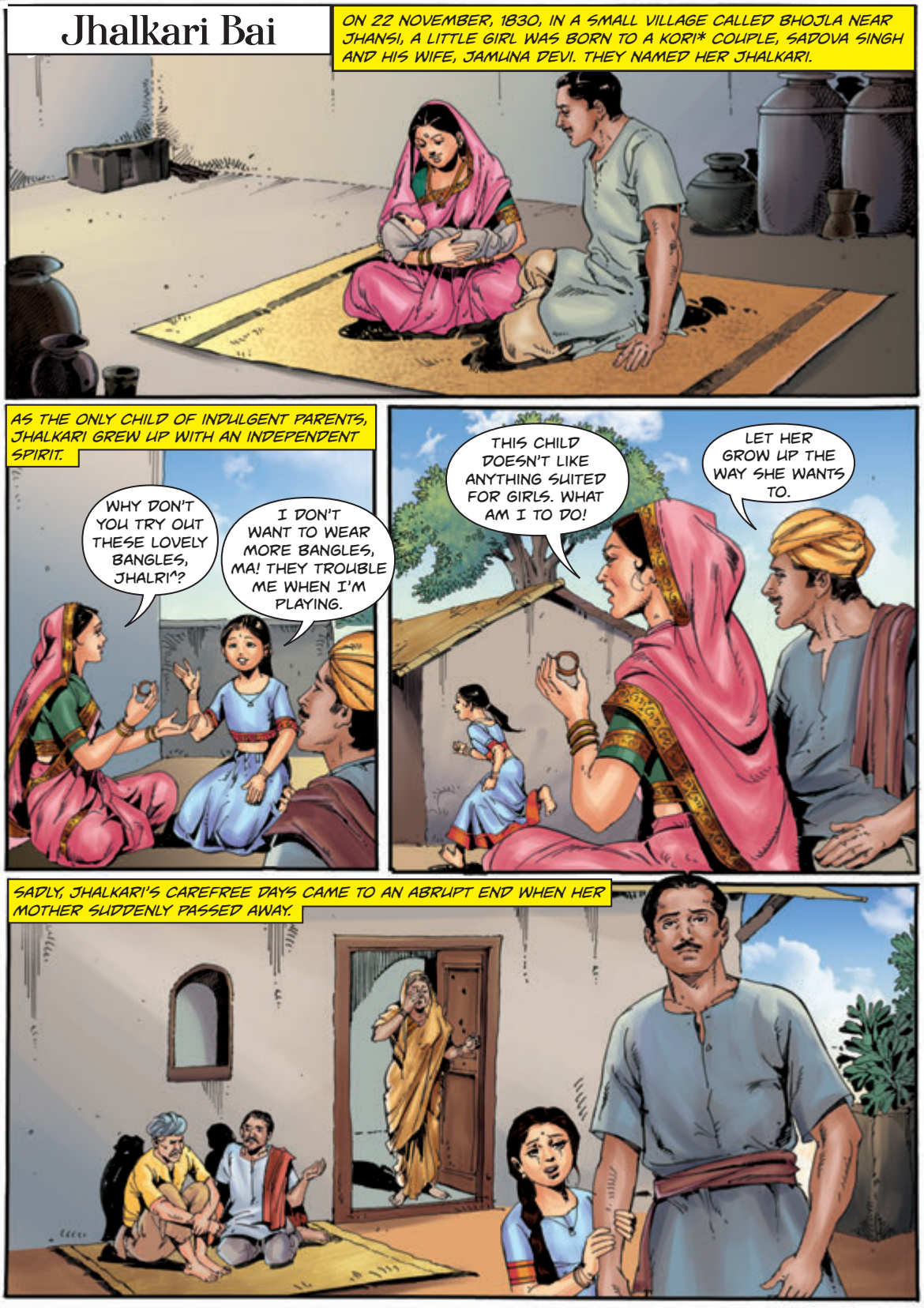
2008
रानी वेलु नाच्चियार
RANI VELU NACHCHIYAR
THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, THERE WERE SEVERAL DANCE BALLET PERFORMANCES AND THEATRICAL PLAYS ON VELU NACHIYAR.
IN 2014, THE VEERAMANGAI VELU NACHIYAR MEMORIAL IN SIVAGANGAI WAS INAUGURATED ALONG WITH A SIX-FOOT BRONZE STATUE OF THE QUEEN.

Jhalkari Bai



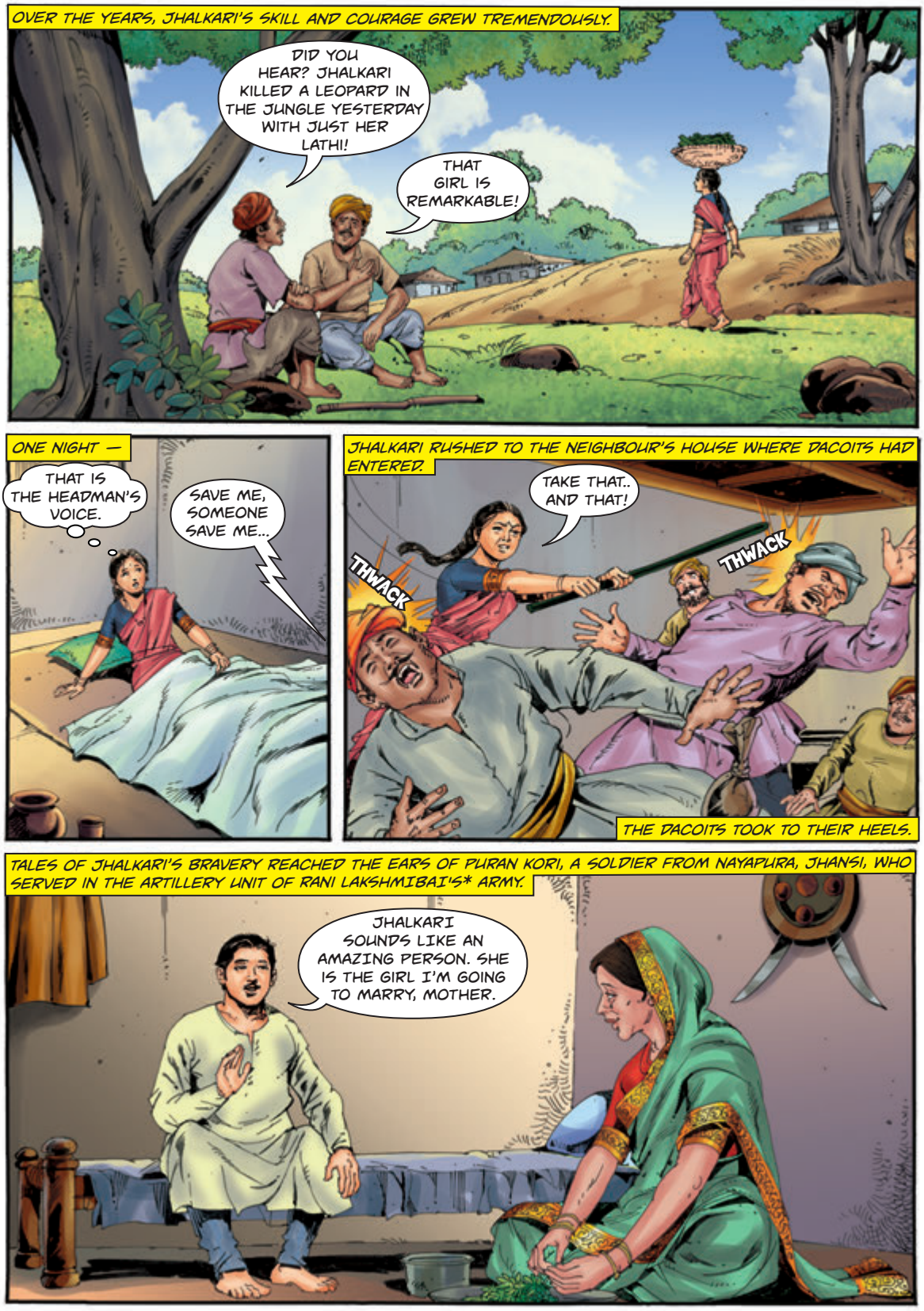
*KORI IS A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WHO WERE TRADITIONALLY WEAVERS BUT SADOVA SINGH WAS A FARMER.

^JHALRI WAS WHAT THEY CALLED HER AFFECTIONATELY.

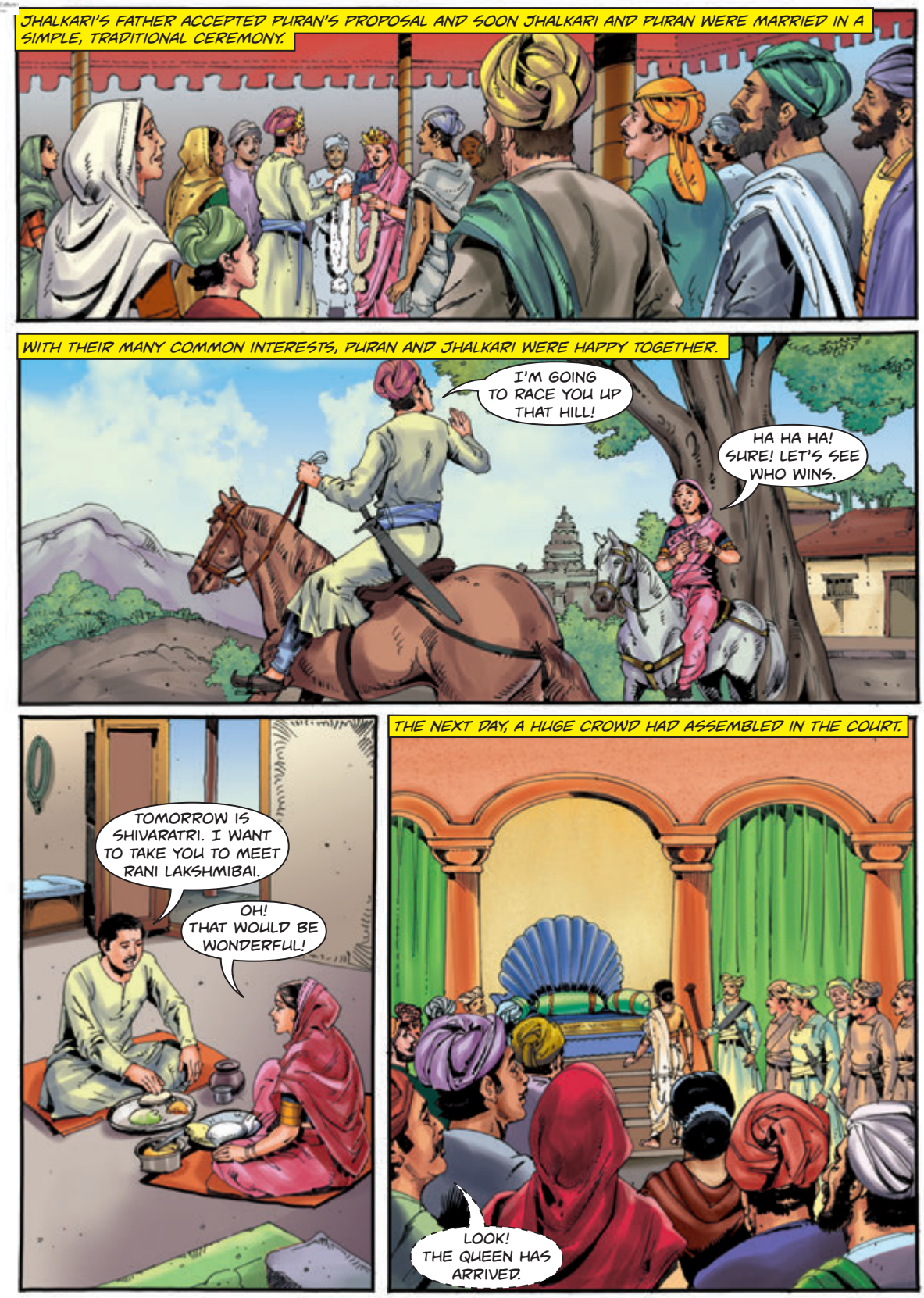
THE SMALL GIRL HAD TO GET BUSY LEARNING HOUSEHOLD CHORES. ONE DAY —
JHALRI, COME WITH ME. I WANT TO TEACH YOU SOMETHING.
WHEN THEY REACHED A NEARBY FOREST —
LET'S START WITH ARCHERY. I GOT THIS BOW AND ARROW MADE SPECIALLY FOR YOU.
FOR ME? HOW WONDERFUL, BABA!
HER FATHER DID NOT STOP WITH THAT. HE TAUGHT HER HOW TO FIGHT WITH LATHIS, OR THICK WOODEN STICKS, AND SWORDS.
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY!
I WANT TO PRACTISE TILL I'M PERFECT, FATHER.
HE EVEN TAUGHT HER TO RIDE A HORSE.
SHE PRACTISED RIGOROUSLY, TILL ONE DAY —
HAHAHA! I WON!

WELL DONE! THIS SURELY CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION.
I WILL MAKE MY FAVOURITE LADDOOS* AND WE WILL BOTH EAT!
WHEN JHALKARI WAS 12, SHE HAD GONE TO THE FOREST TO CUT WOOD WHEN SUDDENLY —
GROWL!
JHALKARI STRUCK THE WOLF WITH HER AXE BUT SHE LOST HER GRIP ON THE HANDLE.
OH!
LEGEND HAS IT THAT THE YOUNG GIRL FOUGHT THE WOLF AND MANAGED TO KILL IT WITH HER BARE HANDS.

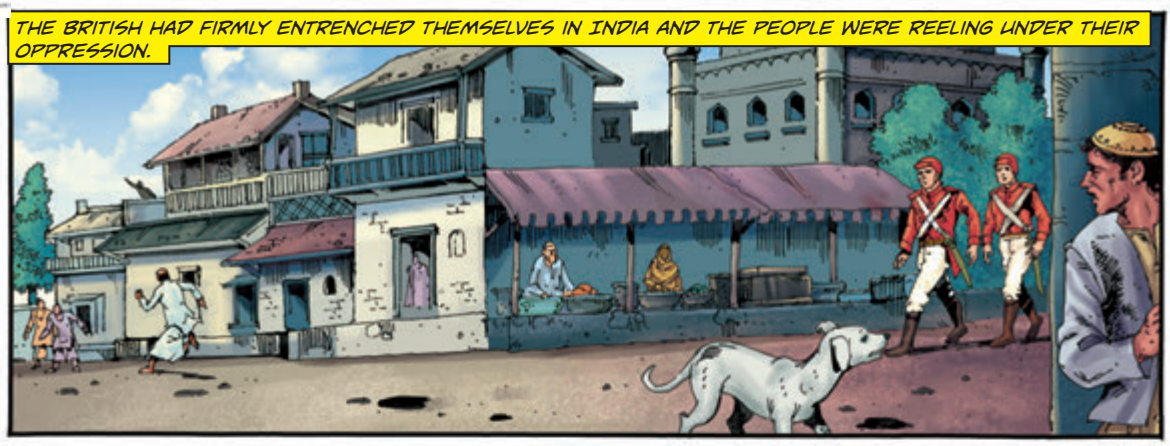
*A SWEET

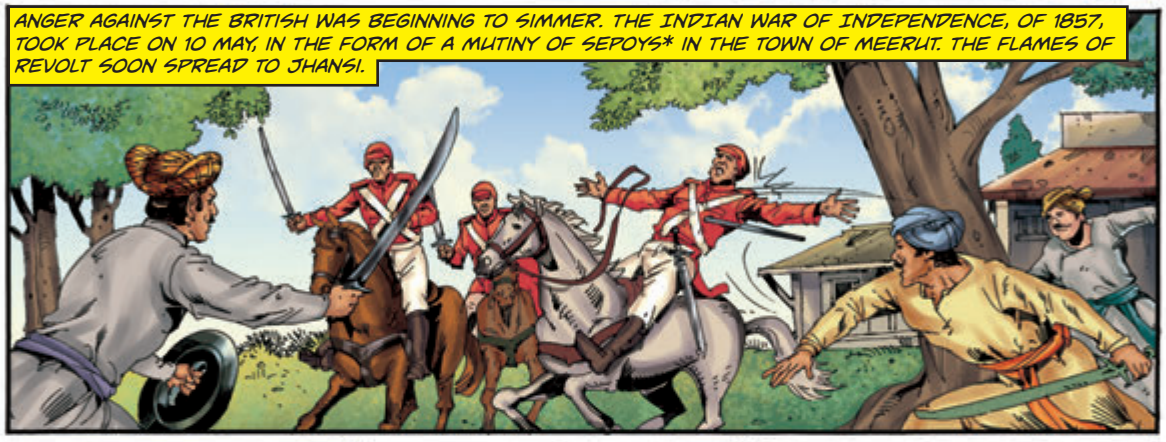


*THE QUEEN OF JHANSI


JHALKARI'S FATHER ACCEPTED PURAN'S PROPOSAL AND SOON JHALKARI AND PURAN WERE MARRIED IN A SIMPLE, TRADITIONAL CEREMONY.
WITH THEIR MANY COMMON INTERESTS, PURAN AND JHALKARI WERE HAPPY TOGETHER.
I'M GOING TO RACE YOU UP THAT HILL!
HA HA HA! SURE! LET'S SEE WHO WINS.
TOMORROW IS SHIVARATRI. I WANT TO TAKE YOU TO MEET RANI LAKSHMIBAI.
OH! THAT WOULD BE WONDERFUL!
THE NEXT DAY, A HUGE CROWD HAD ASSEMBLED IN THE COURT.
LOOK! THE QUEEN HAS ARRIVED.

ONE BY ONE, ALL THOSE PRESENT PAID THEIR RESPECTS TO LAKSHMIBAI. WHEN IT WAS PURAN AND JHALKARI'S TURN —
WHAT A WONDER! YOU LOOK SO MUCH LIKE ME!
JHALKARI'S FEATURES, COMPLEXION AND PHYSICAL STATURE, ALL BORE AN UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO THOSE OF THE QUEEN.
JHALKARI BEGAN TO SPEND TIME WITH THE QUEEN AND THEY BONDED OVER THEIR COMMON LOVE FOR HUNTING AND SHOOTING. SOON —
JHALKARI, I FEEL LIKE I CAN COMPLETELY RELY ON YOU.
I AM TRULY HONOURED, YOUR HIGHNESS!
I AM FORMING A WOMEN'S ARMY AND I WANT YOU TO BE PART OF IT.
I WON'T DISAPPOINT YOU.
JHALKARI BEGAN HER TRAINING...
...AND SOON GAINED EXPERTISE IN ALL ASPECTS OF WARFARE.





*INDIAN SOLDIERS IN THE SERVICE OF EUROPEANS, ESPECIALLY THE BRITISH
THE MUTINY IS NOW CALLED 'THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE'.

*TATYA TOPE WAS PESHWA NANA SAHEB'S GENERAL AND THEY WERE BOTH EMINENT LEADERS OF THE INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, OF 1857.

THE QUEEN WAS HOLDING AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE WAR COUNCIL, WHEN —
YOUR HIGHNESS, I WISH TO MAKE A REQUEST.
SPEAK, JHALKARI.
YOUR HIGHNESS, OUR SOLDIERS ARE DECREASING IN NUMBER AND OUR FOOD STORE IS DEPLETING. IF THE ENEMY FORCES BREACH THE WALLS OF THE FORT, WE WILL BE FORCED TO ENGAGE IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT WITHIN THE FORT. IN SUCH A SITUATION, WE DO NOT WANT ANY DANGER TO BEFALL YOU.
SO, WHAT IS YOUR PLAN?
YOUR HIGHNESS, YOU SHOULD LEAVE THE FORT BY WHATEVER MEANS POSSIBLE. IN ORDER TO FOOL THE ENEMY, I WILL DISGUISE MYSELF AS THE MAHARANI, TAKE A SMALL UNIT OF SOLDIERS AND LEAVE FROM THE FRONT OF THE FORT.
IN THE MEANTIME, YOU CAN ESCAPE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FORT. ONCE YOU ARE IN A SAFE PLACE, YOU CAN REORGANISE THE FORCES AND ATTACK THE BRITISH AGAIN.
THAT IS A BRAVE SUGGESTION, JHALKARI! I WILL BE EVER INDEBTED TO YOU.
PREPARATIONS GOT UNDERWAY TO EXECUTE THEIR PLAN.
IN THE QUEEN'S BATTLE CLOTHES, YOU WOULD FOOL ME!

MEANWHILE —
SHH.. YOU CAN ENTER THROUGH THIS GATE.
HERE, TAKE THIS MONEY.
THE TRAITOR WAS THAKUR DULHA JU, A SOLDIER IN THE QUEEN'S ARMY.
THE SOLDIER'S TREACHERY COST JHANSI DEARLY.
BUT —
JAI BHAVANI!
THE CONFUSION AND CHAOS PROVIDED RANI LAKSHMIBAI THE OPPORTUNITY SHE WAS LOOKING FOR.
LEAVE NOW, YOUR HIGHNESS AND YOU SHOULD BE SAFE.

PLOUGHING THROUGH THE ENEMY RANKS, JHALKARI WENT STRAIGHT TO GENERAL ROSE'S CAMP.
THE QUEEN HAS COME TO CHALLENGE YOU!
SHE FOUGHT BRAVELY FOR AN ENTIRE DAY WITHOUT ANYONE DISCOVERING HER TRUE IDENTITY...

...BUT THE PRETENCE COULD NOT LAST TOO LONG.
SURROUND HER! SHE IS NOT THE QUEEN.

JHALKARI WAS CAPTURED AND TAKEN TO GENERAL ROSE.
YOU HAVE DECEIVED US BY DISGUISING YOURSELF AS THE QUEEN BUT YOU WERE BETRAYED BY ONE OF YOUR OWN.

THOSE WHO BETRAY WILL SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. AS FOR ME, YOU CAN SHOOT ME, I'M PREPARED TO DIE FOR MY QUEEN!

THE WOMAN IS MAD!
IF EVEN ONE PERCENT OF THEIR WOMEN ARE AS MAD AS THIS ONE, WE WILL HAVE TO ABANDON EVERYTHING HERE AND RETREAT.
TAKE HER AWAY AND KEEP STRICT GUARD.
HOWEVER, JHALKARI WAS NOT ONE TO BE STOPPED. LATER THAT NIGHT —
WHEN GENERAL ROSE LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON THE FORT AT DAWN, HE WAS SHOCKED.
HOW DID SHE GET HERE?

A FIERCE BATTLE ENSUED.
JHALKARI AND HER SOLDIERS WERE SUCCESSFULLY REDUCING THE ENEMY'S NUMBERS, WHEN —
JHALKARI, PURAN HAS JUST BEEN MARTYRED!
I WON'T LET YOUR SACRIFICE GO IN VAIN.
SHE NOW FOUGHT WITH RENEWED VIGOUR.

THE BRITISH TROOPS BEGAN TO TARGET HER. THEN —
AAH!
AS SHE FELL, A FEW MORE BULLETS HIT HER.
JHALKARI BREATHED HER LAST, SACRIFICING HER LIFE FOR THE QUEEN AND THE LAND SHE LOVED SO MUCH.

WHILE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF JHALKARI WERE UNKNOWN TILL THEY WERE BROUGHT TO LIGHT IN THE 1960S BY HISTORIANS, TODAY SHE IS A SYMBOL OF PRIDE NOT JUST FOR HER COMMUNITY BUT FOR THE ENTIRE NATION.

OVER THE YEARS, HER GREATNESS HAS BEEN CELEBRATED THROUGH PLAYS, STORIES AND SONGS AND SHE IS REVERED AS VEERANGANA OR BRAVE JHALKARI.

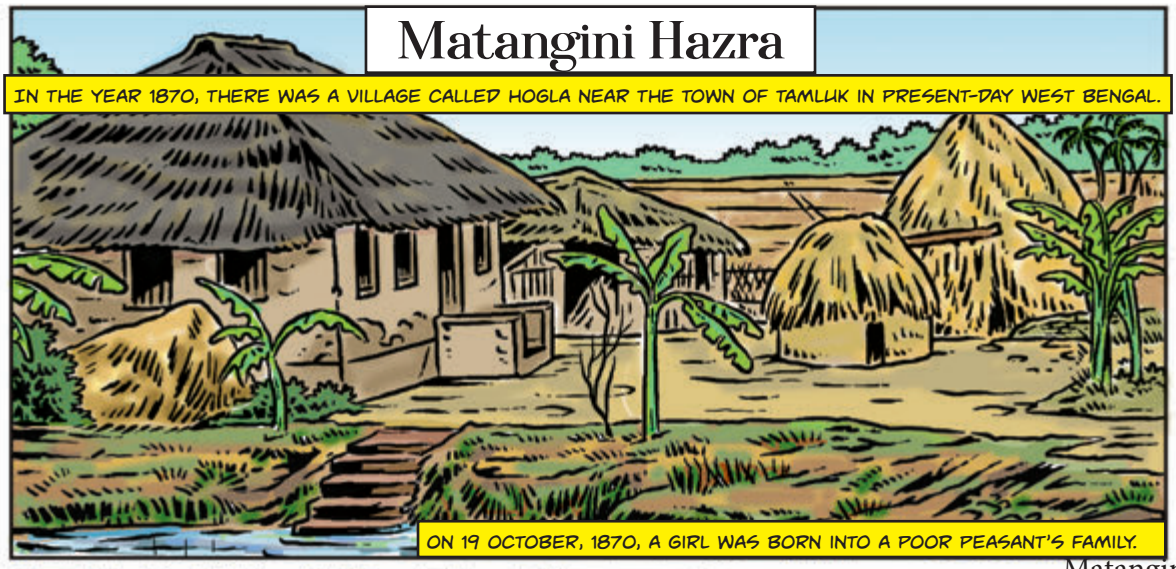
THE STATUES BUILT IN HER HONOUR AND THE VEERANGANA MEMORIAL TRUST IN BUNDELKHAND HAVE KEPT THE LEGEND OF JHALKARI ALIVE. EVEN TODAY, SHE SERVES AS AN INSPIRATION TO YOUNG GIRLS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA HONOURED THE WARRIOR BY RELEASING A POSTAL STAMP DEPICTING JHALKARI BAI*. ONE PARTICULAR POEM IMMORTALISED JHALKARI, IMPRINTING HER IN THE MINDS OF PEOPLE, FOREVER.

मचा झाँसी में घमासान,
चहुँ ओर मची किलकारी थी।
अंग्रेज़ों से लोहा लेने,
रण में कूदी झलकारी थी।

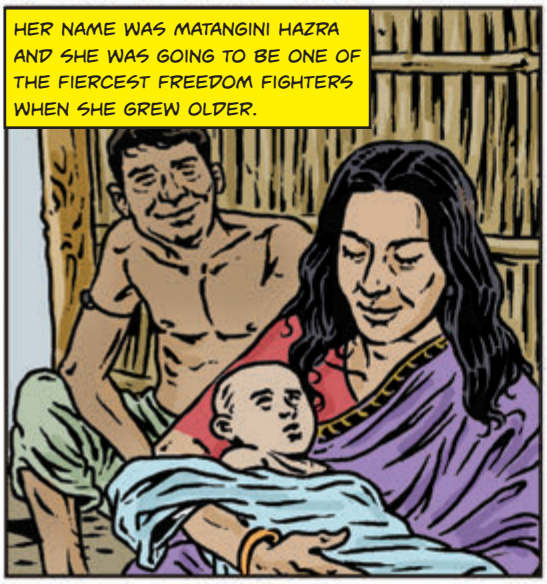
AMIDST THE SOUND AND FURY OF BATTLE IN JHANSI, PLUNGED JHALKARI TO CONFRONT THE BULLETS OF THE BRITISH.

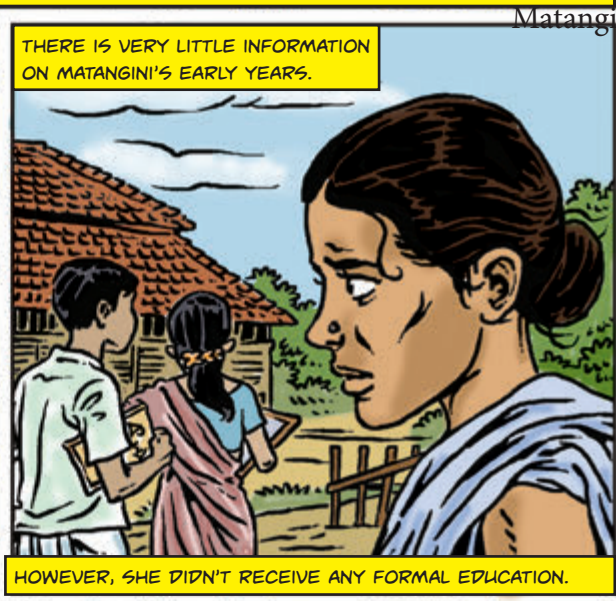
*RESPECTFUL TERM USED TO ADDRESS A WOMAN

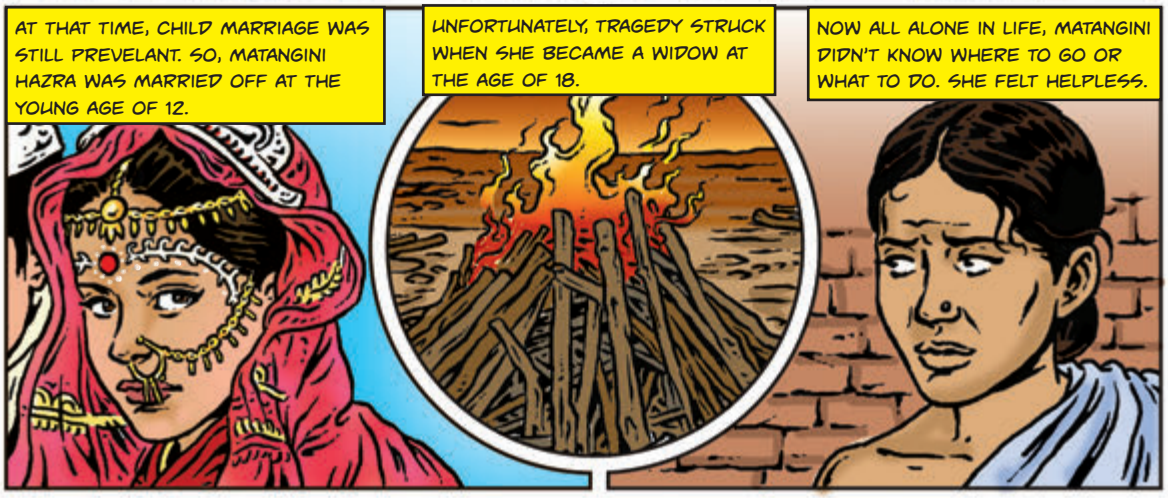
Matangini Hazra

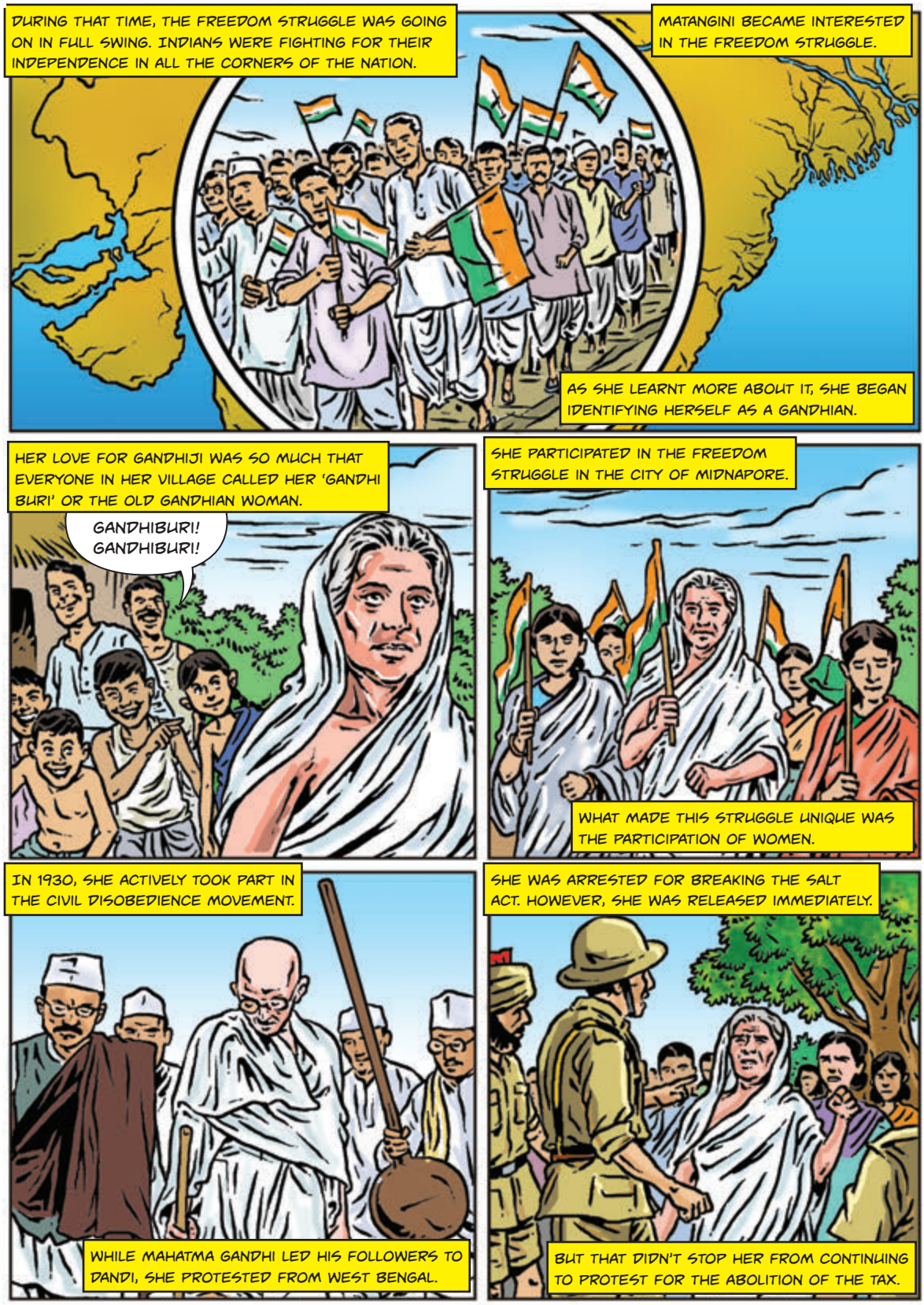


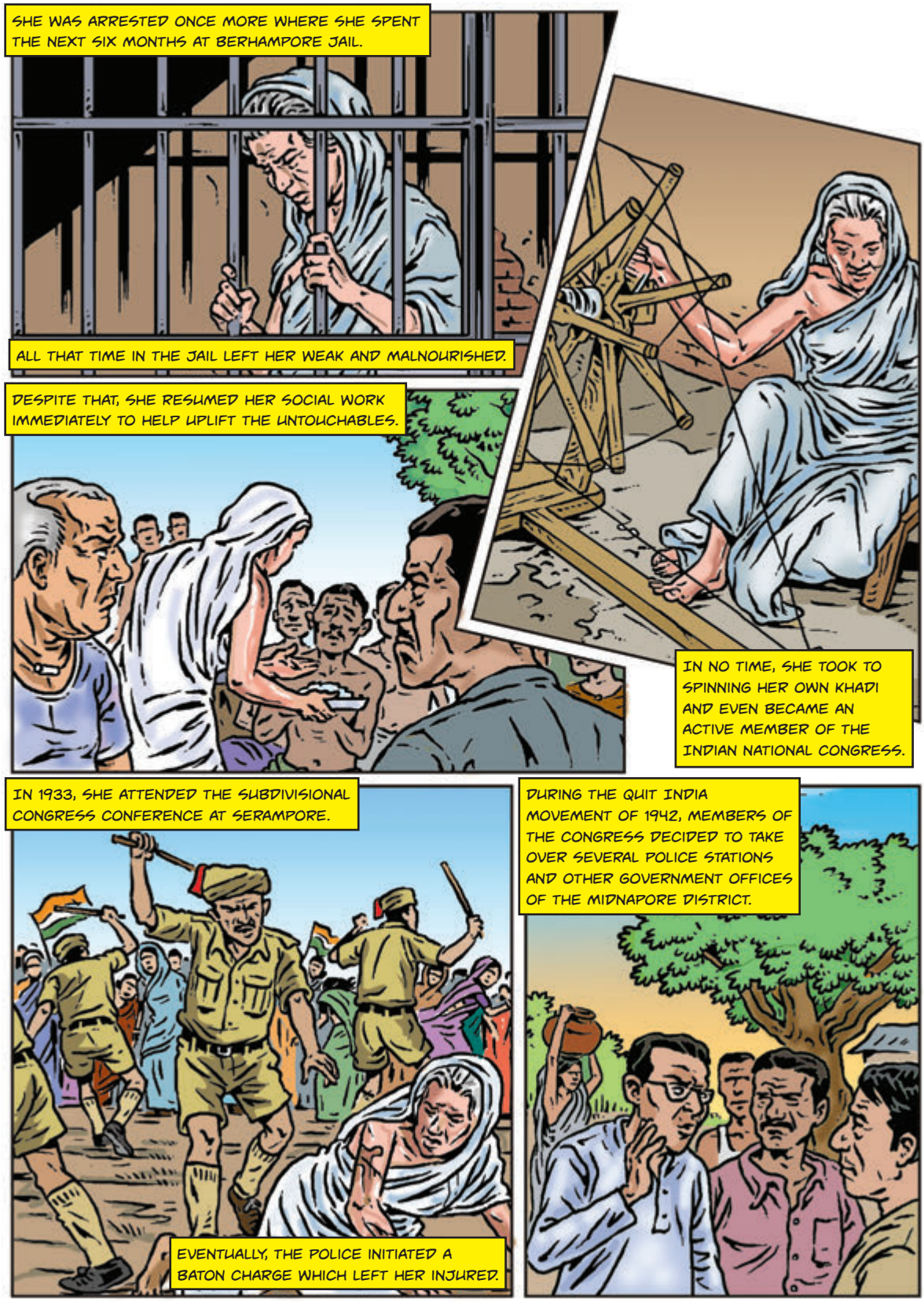
Matangini



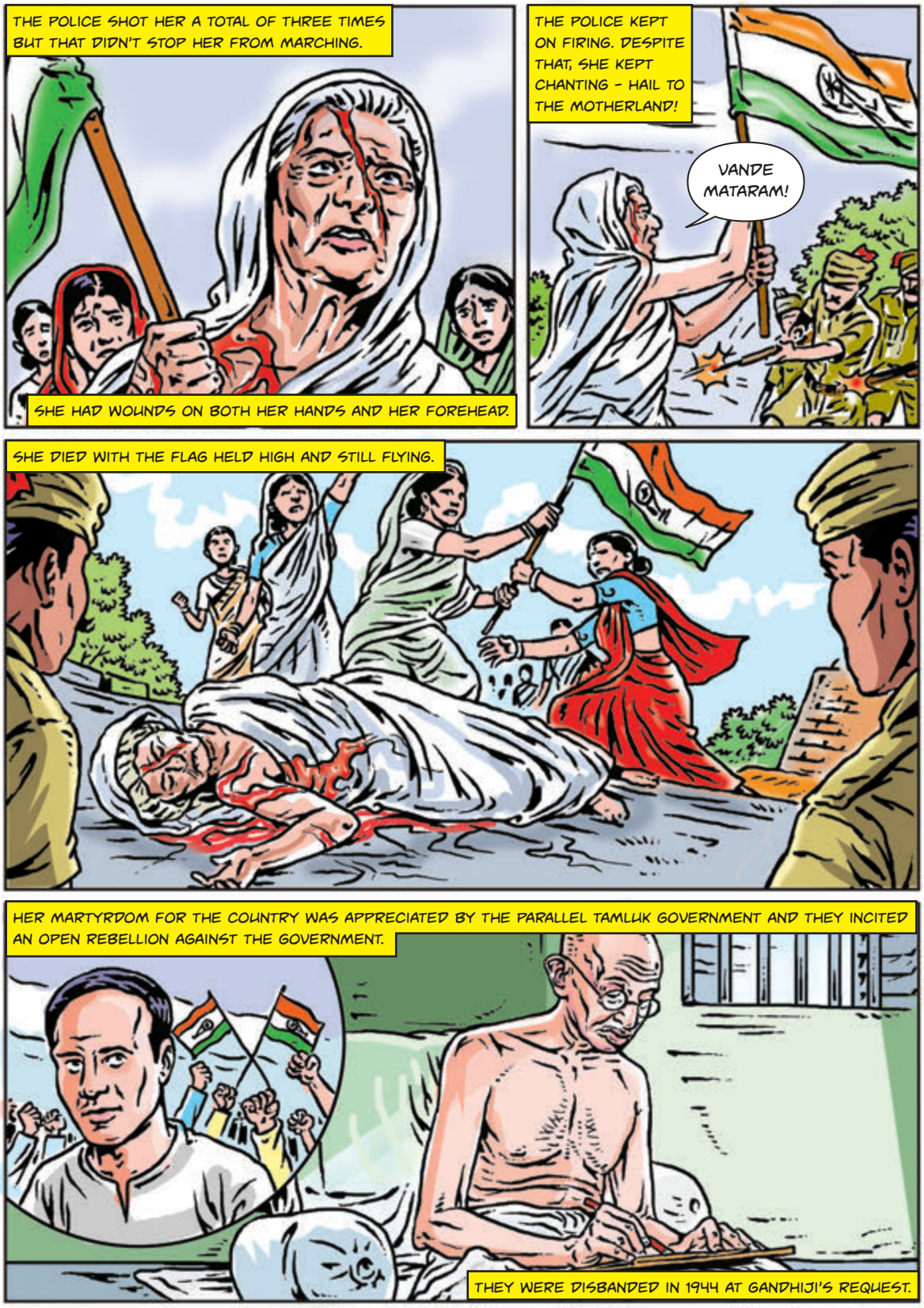





DURING THAT TIME, THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE WAS GOING ON IN FULL SWING. INDIANS WERE FIGHTING FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE IN ALL THE CORNERS OF THE NATION.
MATANGINI BECAME INTERESTED IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
AS SHE LEARNT MORE ABOUT IT, SHE BEGAN IDENTIFYING HERSELF AS A GANDHIAN.
HER LOVE FOR GANDHIJI WAS SO MUCH THAT EVERYONE IN HER VILLAGE CALLED HER 'GANDHI BURI' OR THE OLD GANDHIAN WOMAN.
GANDHIBURI! GANDHIBURI!
SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN THE CITY OF MIDNAPORE.
WHAT MADE THIS STRUGGLE UNIQUE WAS THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN.
IN 1930, SHE ACTIVELY TOOK PART IN THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT.
WHILE MAHATMA GANDHI LED HIS FOLLOWERS TO DANDI, SHE PROTESTED FROM WEST BENGAL.
SHE WAS ARRESTED FOR BREAKING THE SALT ACT. HOWEVER, SHE WAS RELEASED IMMEDIATELY.
BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HER FROM CONTINUING TO PROTEST FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE TAX.

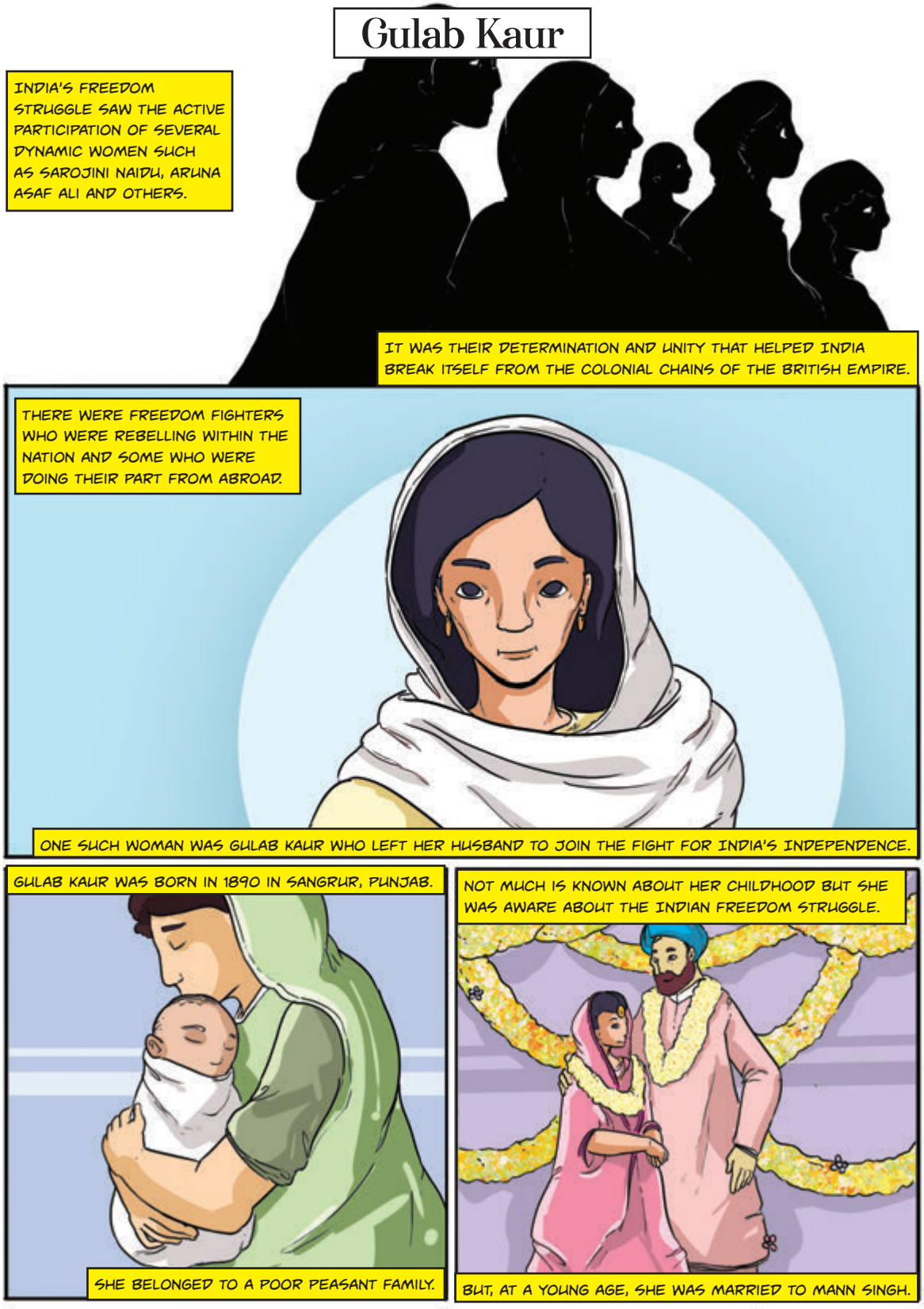

SHE WAS ARRESTED ONCE MORE WHERE SHE SPENT THE NEXT SIX MONTHS AT BERHAMPORE JAIL.
ALL THAT TIME IN THE JAIL LEFT HER WEAK AND MALNOURISHED.
DESPITE THAT, SHE RESUMED HER SOCIAL WORK IMMEDIATELY TO HELP UPLIFT THE UNTOUCHABLES.
IN NO TIME, SHE TOOK TO SPINNING HER OWN KHADI AND EVEN BECAME AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.
IN 1933, SHE ATTENDED THE SUBDIVISIONAL CONGRESS CONFERENCE AT SERAMPORE.
EVENTUALLY, THE POLICE INITIATED A BATON CHARGE WHICH LEFT HER INJURED.
DURING THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT OF 1942, MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS DECIDED TO TAKE OVER SEVERAL POLICE STATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICES OF THE MIDNAPORE DISTRICT.

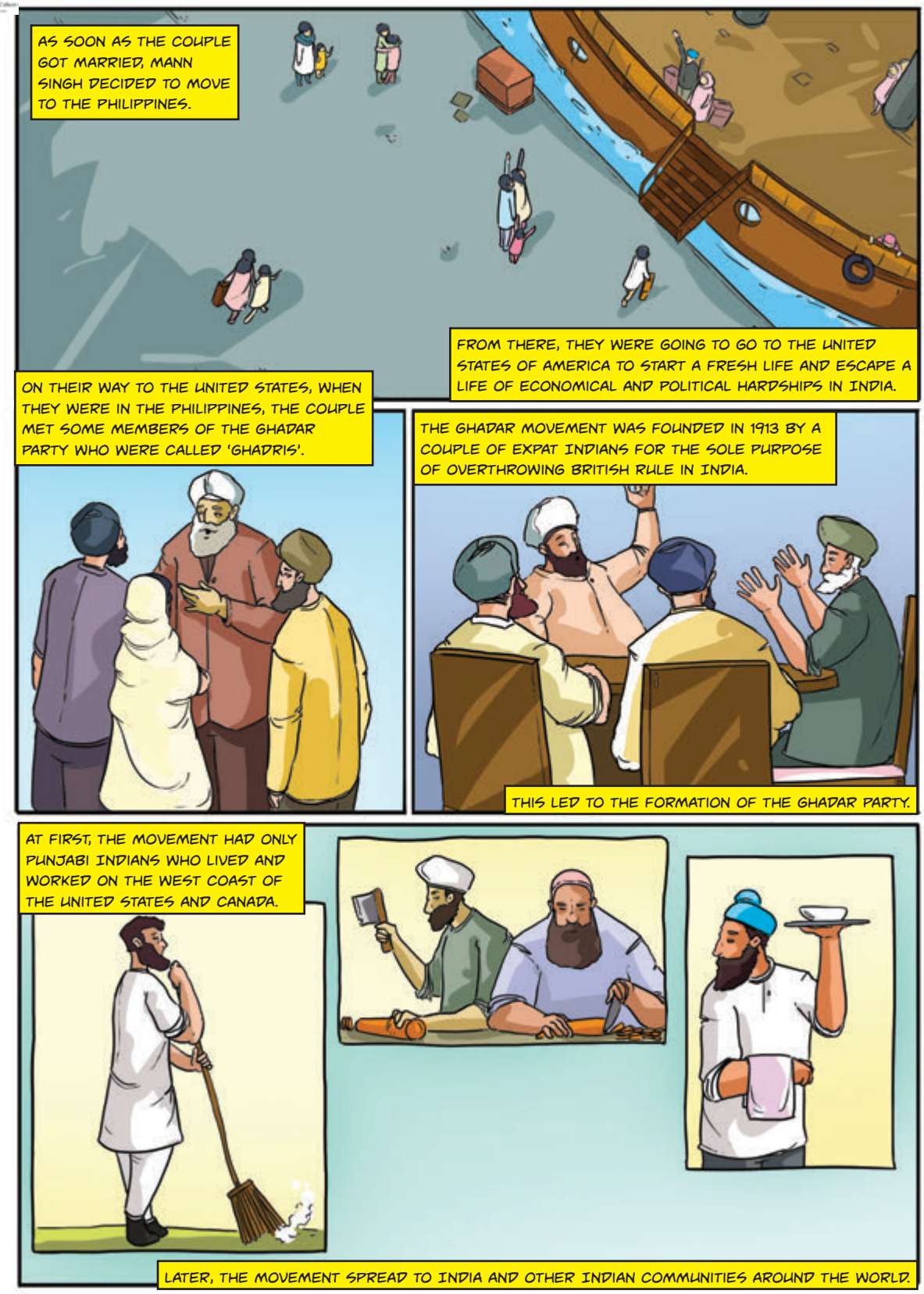
IT WAS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN OVERTHROWING BRITISH RULE IN THE DISTRICT AND ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT INDIAN STATE.
HAZRA WAS 72 AT THE TIME. SHE LED THE PROCESSION OF APPROXIMATELY SIX THOUSAND SUPPORTERS, MOSTLY WOMEN.
THEIR INTENTIONS WERE TO TAKE OVER THE TAMLUK POLICE STATION.
WHEN THE PROCESSION REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN, THE CROWN POLICE ORDERED THEM TO DISBAND.
HAZRA STEPPED FORWARD TO APPEAL TO THE POLICE TO NOT OPEN FIRE AT THE CROWD.
HOWEVER, THEY MISTOOK HER ADVANCES AND SHOT HER.
DESPITE THE GUNSHOT, HAZRA PROCEEDED TO ADVANCE WITH THE TRI-COLOUR FLAG.
THE VOLUNTEERS WERE AT THE BACK, HORRIFIED.

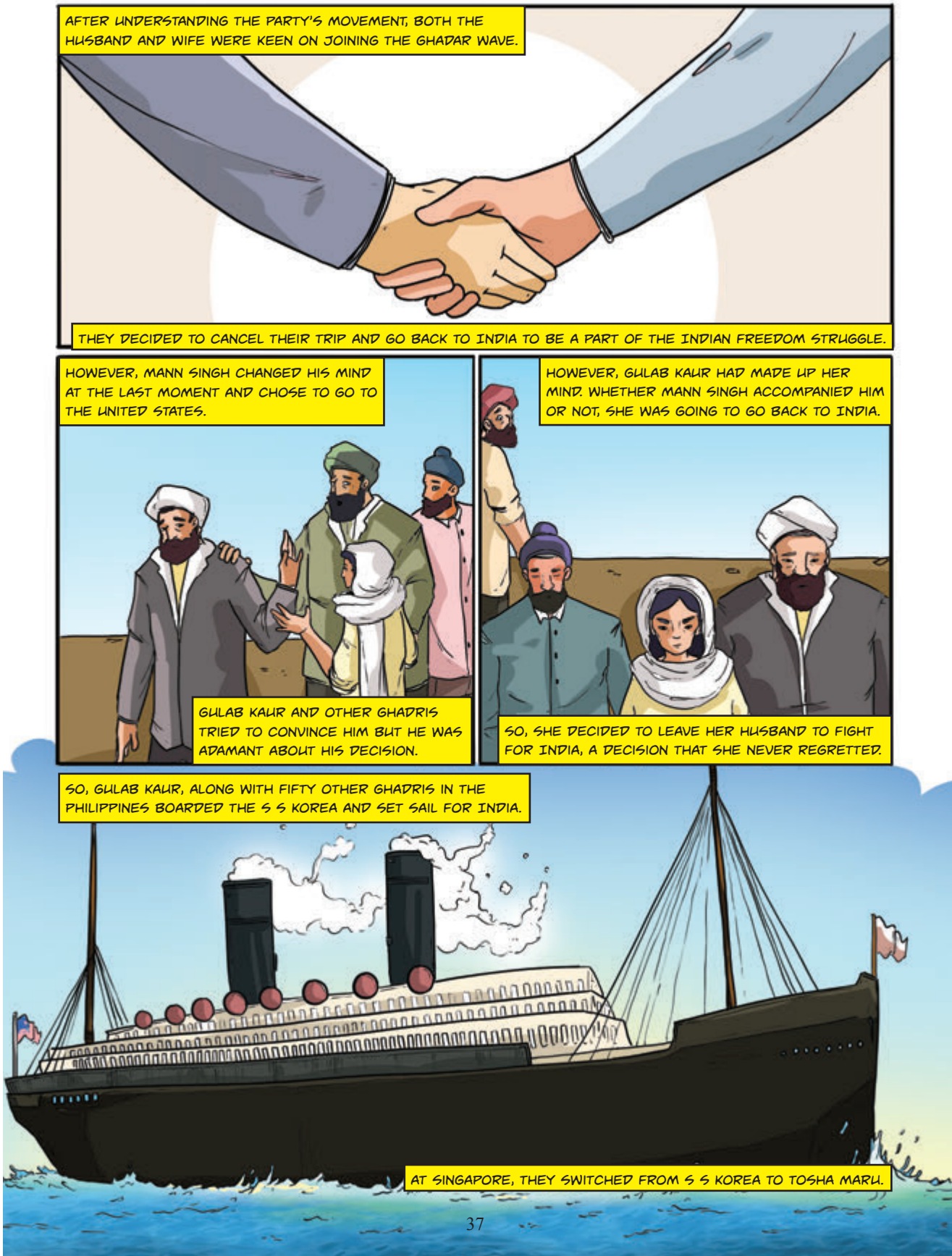

THE POLICE SHOT HER A TOTAL OF THREE TIMES BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HER FROM MARCHING.
SHE HAD WOUNDS ON BOTH HER HANDS AND HER FOREHEAD.
THE POLICE KEPT ON FIRING. DESPITE THAT, SHE KEPT CHANTING – HAIL TO THE MOTHERLAND!
VANDE MATARAM!
SHE DIED WITH THE FLAG HELD HIGH AND STILL FLYING.
HER MARTYRDOM FOR THE COUNTRY WAS APPRECIATED BY THE PARALLEL TAMLUK GOVERNMENT AND THEY INCITED AN OPEN REBELLION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.
THEY WERE DISBANDED IN 1944 AT GANDHIJI'S REQUEST.

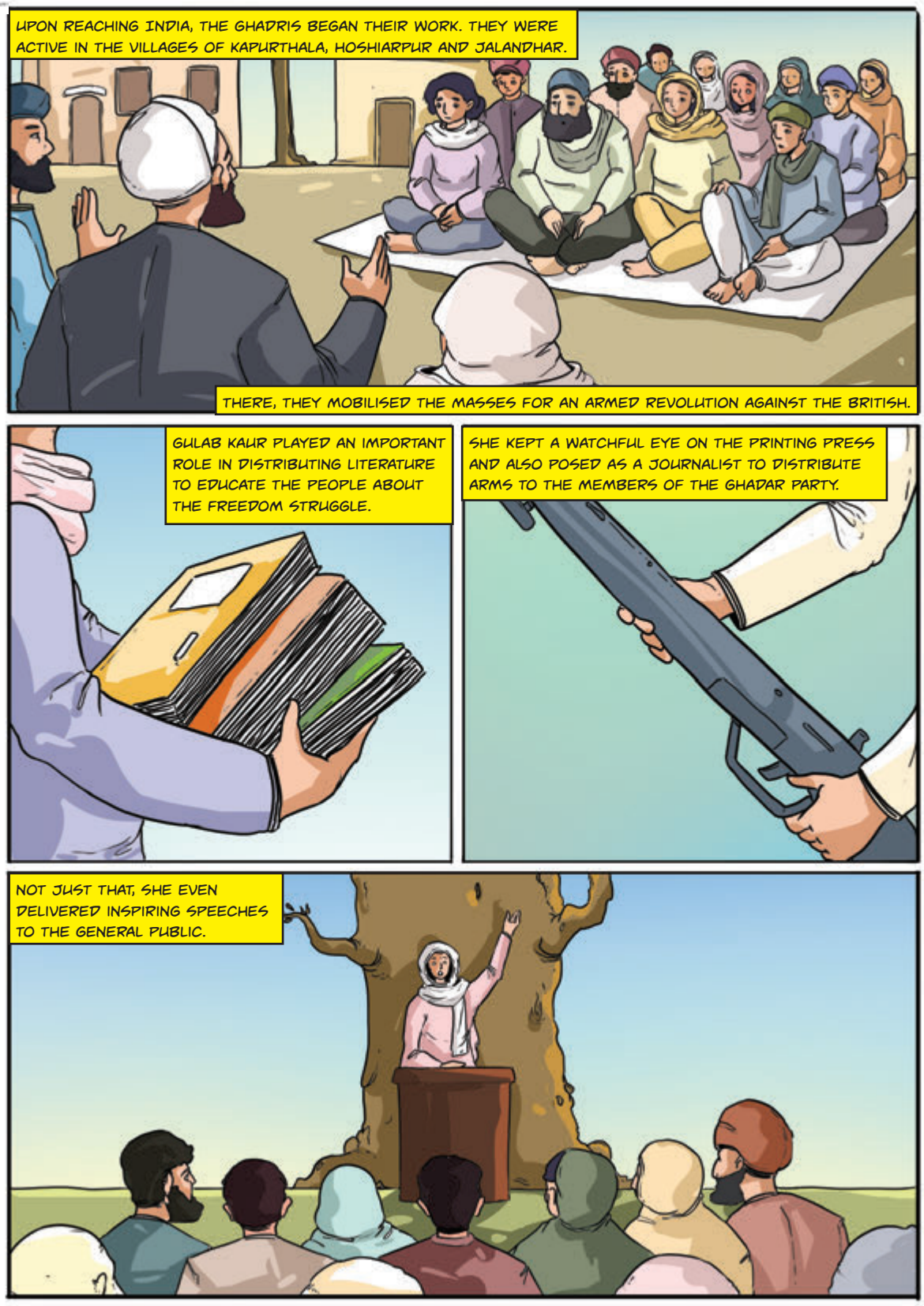
INDIA GAINED INDEPENDENCE IN 1947 AND NUMEROUS SCHOOLS, COLONIES, AND STREETS WERE NAMED AFTER HAZRA.
THE FIRST STATUE OF A WOMAN IN KOLKATA WAS OF HAZRA'S.
Calcutta
Tamluk
IT WAS PUT IN 1977 AT THE SAME SPOT WHERE SHE WAS KILLED IN TAMLUK.
A COTTAGE WAS ESTABLISHED IN HER MEMORY AT HER BIRTHPLACE, HOGLA.
THE STATUE OF MATANGINI HAZRA IS A CONSTANT REMINDER OF THE REMARKABLE LIFE THAT SHE HAD LIVED.
IN 2002, THE DEPARTMENT OF POSTS OF INDIA ISSUED A FIVE RUPEE POSTAGE STAMP OF MATANGINI HAZRA.
भारत INDIA 500
मातंगिनी हाजरा MATANGINI HAZRA
ताम्रलिप्त जातीय सरकार TAMRALIPTA JATIYA SARKAR

Gulab Kaur

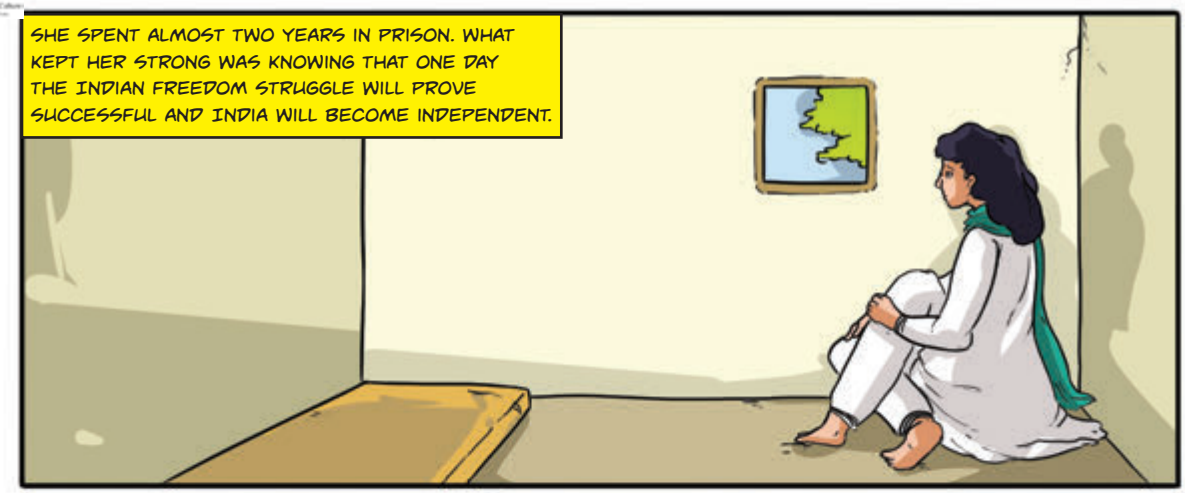

INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE SAW THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF SEVERAL DYNAMIC WOMEN SUCH AS SAROJINI NAIDU, ARUNA ASAF ALI AND OTHERS.
IT WAS THEIR DETERMINATION AND UNITY THAT HELPED INDIA BREAK ITSELF FROM THE COLONIAL CHAINS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.
THERE WERE FREEDOM FIGHTERS WHO WERE REBELLING WITHIN THE NATION AND SOME WHO WERE DOING THEIR PART FROM ABROAD.
ONE SUCH WOMAN WAS GULAB KAUR WHO LEFT HER HUSBAND TO JOIN THE FIGHT FOR INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE.
GULAB KAUR WAS BORN IN 1890 IN SANGRUR, PUNJAB.
SHE BELONGED TO A POOR PEASANT FAMILY.
NOT MUCH IS KNOWN ABOUT HER CHILDHOOD BUT SHE WAS AWARE ABOUT THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
BUT, AT A YOUNG AGE, SHE WAS MARRIED TO MANN SINGH.


AS SOON AS THE COUPLE GOT MARRIED, MANN SINGH DECIDED TO MOVE TO THE PHILIPPINES.
FROM THERE, THEY WERE GOING TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO START A FRESH LIFE AND ESCAPE A LIFE OF ECONOMICAL AND POLITICAL HARDSHIPS IN INDIA.
ON THEIR WAY TO THE UNITED STATES, WHEN THEY WERE IN THE PHILIPPINES, THE COUPLE MET SOME MEMBERS OF THE GHADAR PARTY WHO WERE CALLED 'GHADRIS'.
THE GHADAR MOVEMENT WAS FOUNDED IN 1913 BY A COUPLE OF EXPAT INDIANS FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF OVERTHROWING BRITISH RULE IN INDIA.
THIS LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE GHADAR PARTY.
AT FIRST, THE MOVEMENT HAD ONLY PUNJABI INDIANS WHO LIVED AND WORKED ON THE WEST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.
LATER, THE MOVEMENT SPREAD TO INDIA AND OTHER INDIAN COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD.

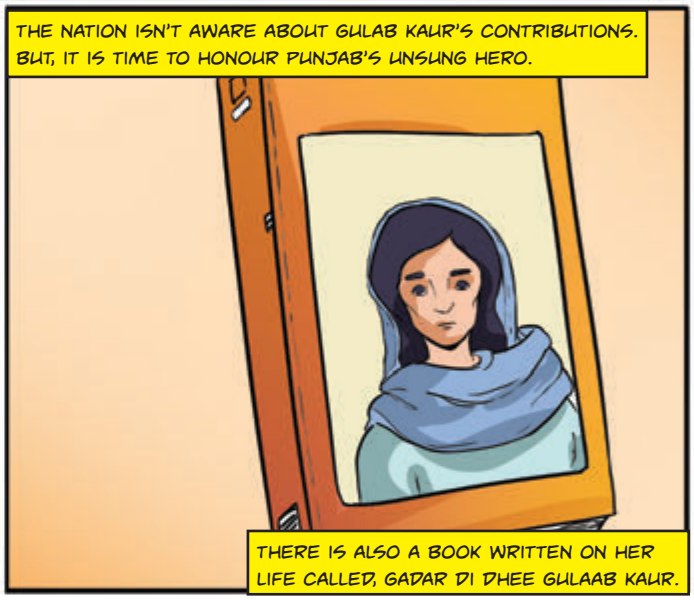

AFTER UNDERSTANDING THE PARTY'S MOVEMENT, BOTH THE HUSBAND AND WIFE WERE KEEN ON JOINING THE GHADAR WAVE.
THEY DECIDED TO CANCEL THEIR TRIP AND GO BACK TO INDIA TO BE A PART OF THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
HOWEVER, MANN SINGH CHANGED HIS MIND AT THE LAST MOMENT AND CHOSE TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES.
GULAB KAUR AND OTHER GHADRIS TRIED TO CONVINCE HIM BUT HE WAS ADAMANT ABOUT HIS DECISION.
HOWEVER, GULAB KAUR HAD MADE UP HER MIND. WHETHER MANN SINGH ACCOMPANIED HIM OR NOT, SHE WAS GOING TO GO BACK TO INDIA.
SO, SHE DECIDED TO LEAVE HER HUSBAND TO FIGHT FOR INDIA, A DECISION THAT SHE NEVER REGRETTED.
SO, GULAB KAUR, ALONG WITH FIFTY OTHER GHADRIS IN THE PHILIPPINES BOARDED THE S S KOREA AND SET SAIL FOR INDIA.
AT SINGAPORE, THEY SWITCHED FROM S S KOREA TO TOSHA MARU.

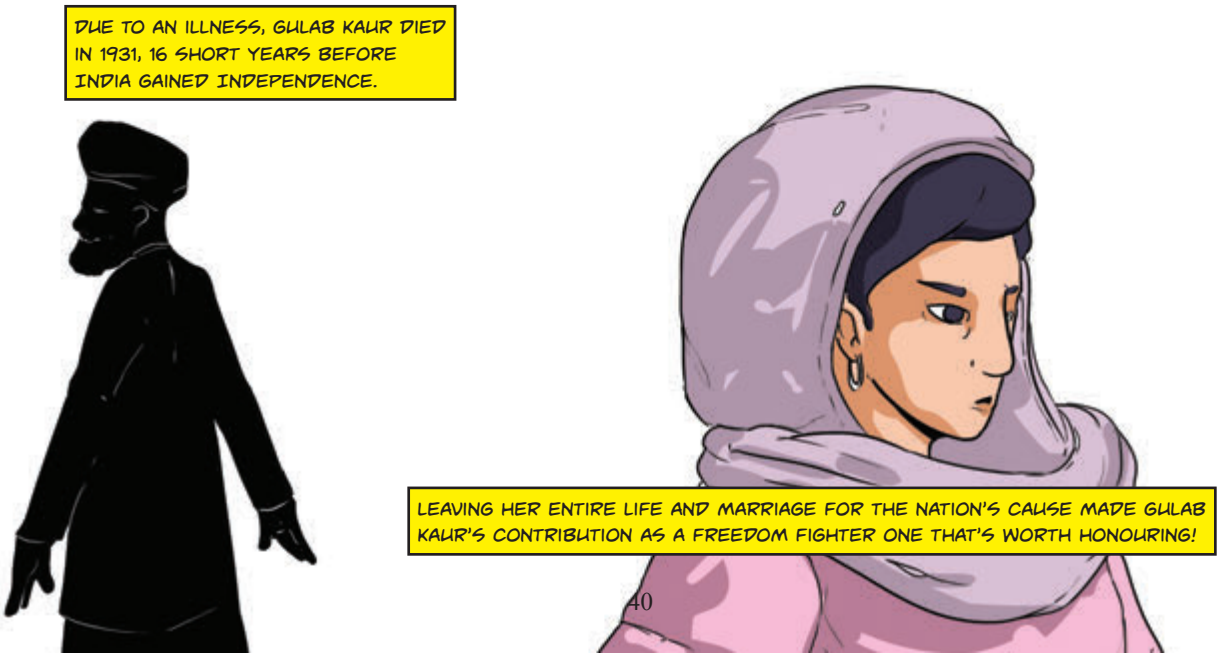

UPON REACHING INDIA, THE GHADRIS BEGAN THEIR WORK. THEY WERE ACTIVE IN THE VILLAGES OF KAPURTHALA, HOSHIARPUR AND JALANDHAR.
THERE, THEY MOBILISED THE MASSES FOR AN ARMED REVOLUTION AGAINST THE BRITISH.
GULAB KAUR PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN DISTRIBUTING LITERATURE TO EDUCATE THE PEOPLE ABOUT THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
SHE KEPT A WATCHFUL EYE ON THE PRINTING PRESS AND ALSO POSED AS A JOURNALIST TO DISTRIBUTE ARMS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GHADAR PARTY.
NOT JUST THAT, SHE EVEN DELIVERED INSPIRING SPEECHES TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

SHE MANAGED TO AMASS SEVERAL VOLUNTEERS TO FIGHT AGAINST THE BRITISH.
HOWEVER, UNBEKNOWNST TO HER, THE BRITISH SMELLED SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS AND SHE WAS CLOSELY BEING WATCHED BY THEM.
AFTER GATHERING ENOUGH EVIDENCE, BRITISH AUTHORITIES ARRESTED GULAB KAUR UNDER THE CHARGES OF SEDITION. SHE WAS PUT IN A PRISON IN LAHORE.
IN PRISON, SHE WAS TORTURED IN THE MOST INHUMANE WAY POSSIBLE. BUT SHE ENDURED IT WITH UTMOST DETERMINATION.

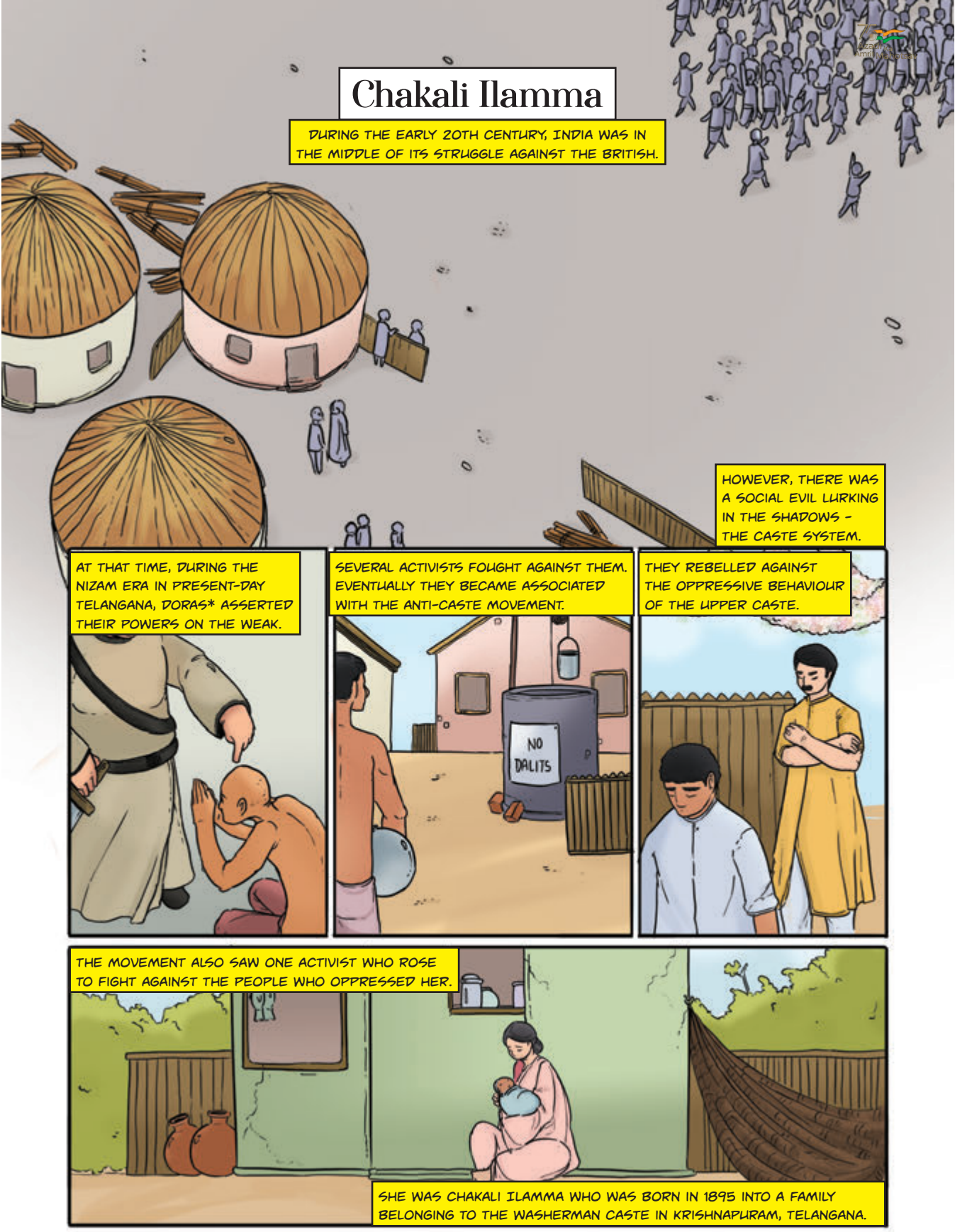

SHE SPENT ALMOST TWO YEARS IN PRISON. WHAT KEPT HER STRONG WAS KNOWING THAT ONE DAY THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE WILL PROVE SUCCESSFUL AND INDIA WILL BECOME INDEPENDENT.

AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM THE PRISON, SHE CONTINUED TO MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO STAND UP AGAINST THE BRITISH.

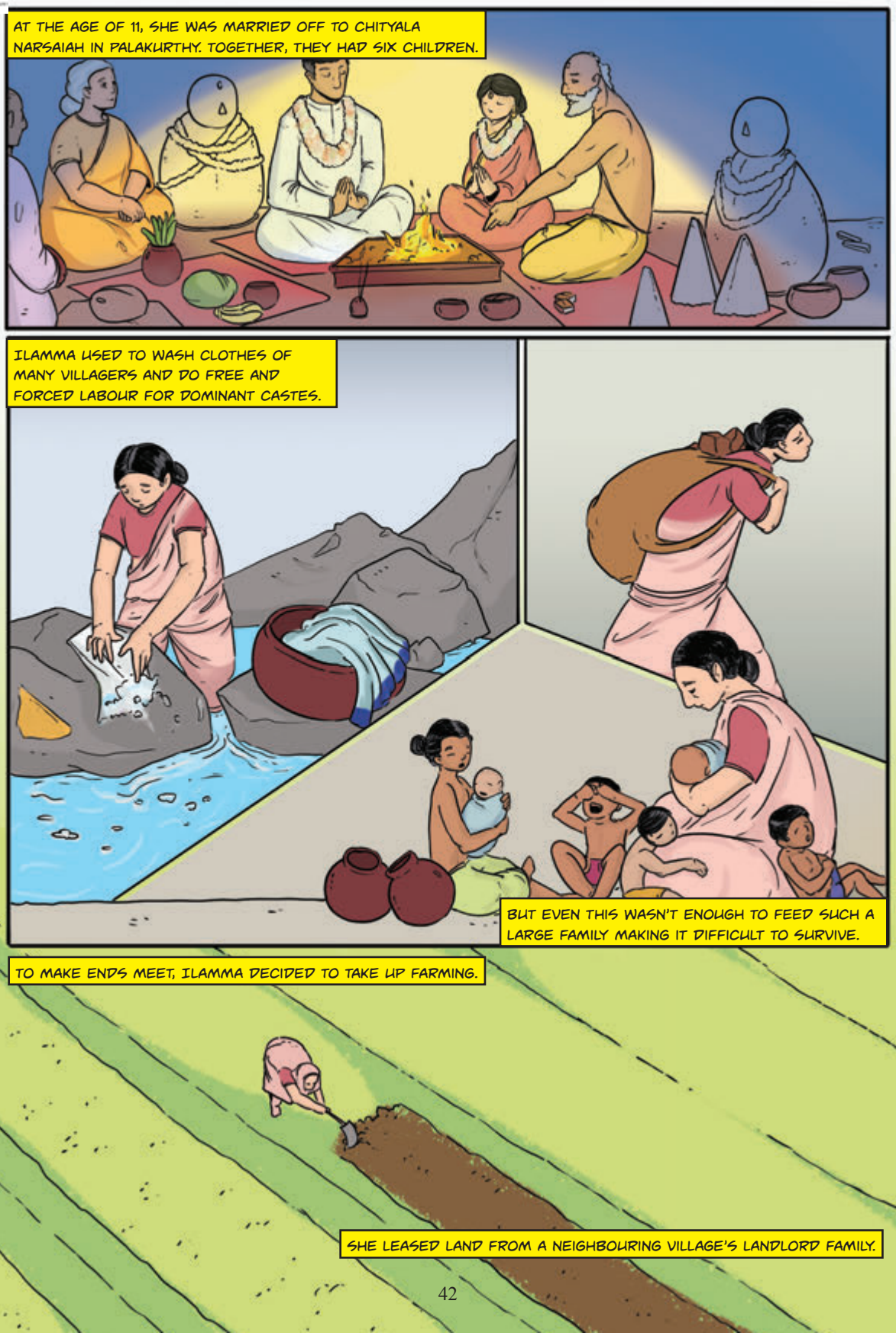

THE NATION ISN'T AWARE ABOUT GULAB KAUR'S CONTRIBUTIONS. BUT, IT IS TIME TO HONOUR PUNJAB'S UNSUNG HERO.
THERE IS ALSO A BOOK WRITTEN ON HER LIFE CALLED, GADAR DI DHEE GULAAB KAUR.


DUE TO AN ILLNESS, GULAB KAUR DIED IN 1931, 16 SHORT YEARS BEFORE INDIA GAINED INDEPENDENCE.
LEAVING HER ENTIRE LIFE AND MARRIAGE FOR THE NATION'S CAUSE MADE GULAB KAUR'S CONTRIBUTION AS A FREEDOM FIGHTER ONE THAT'S WORTH HONOURING!

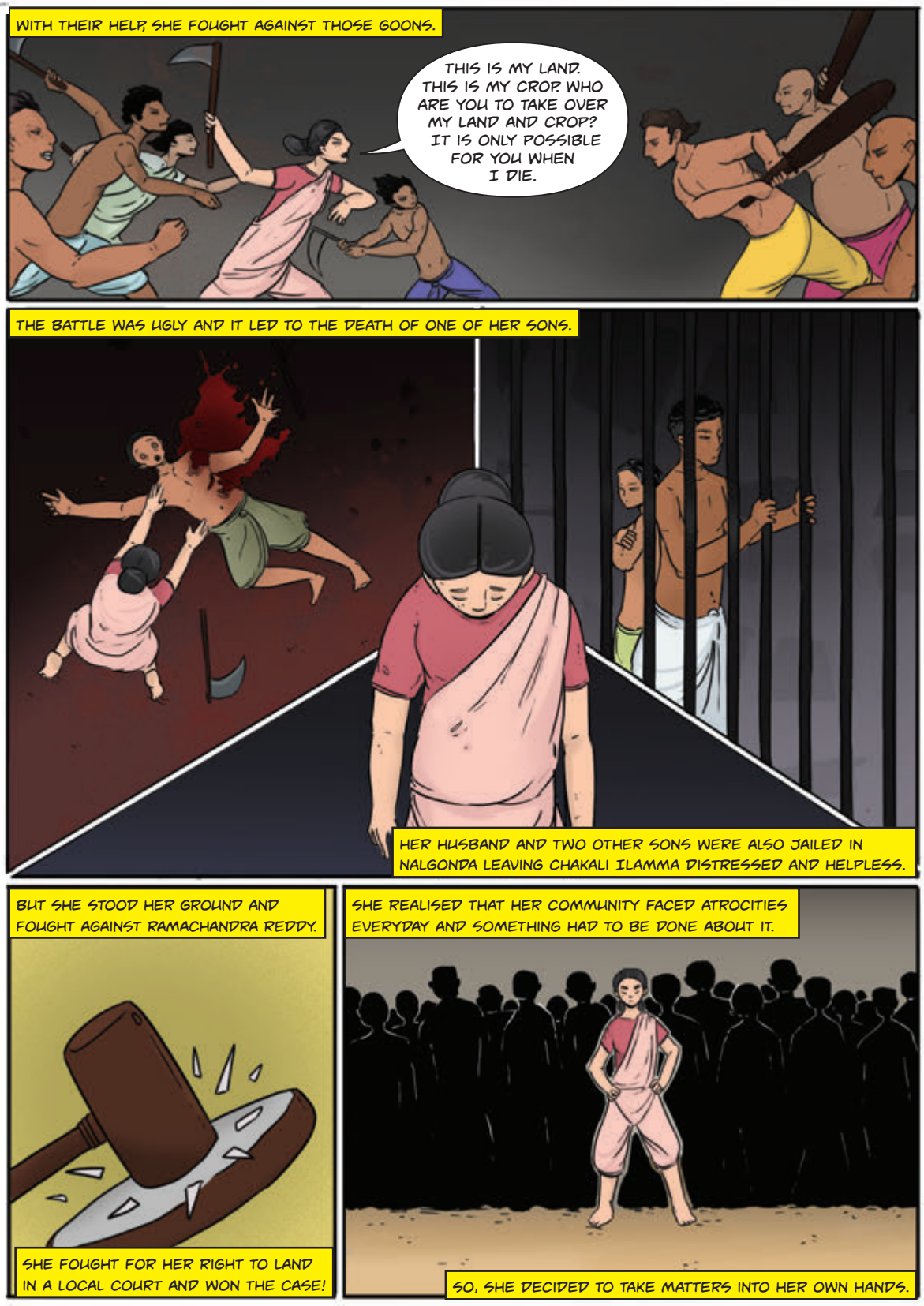
Chakali Ilamma



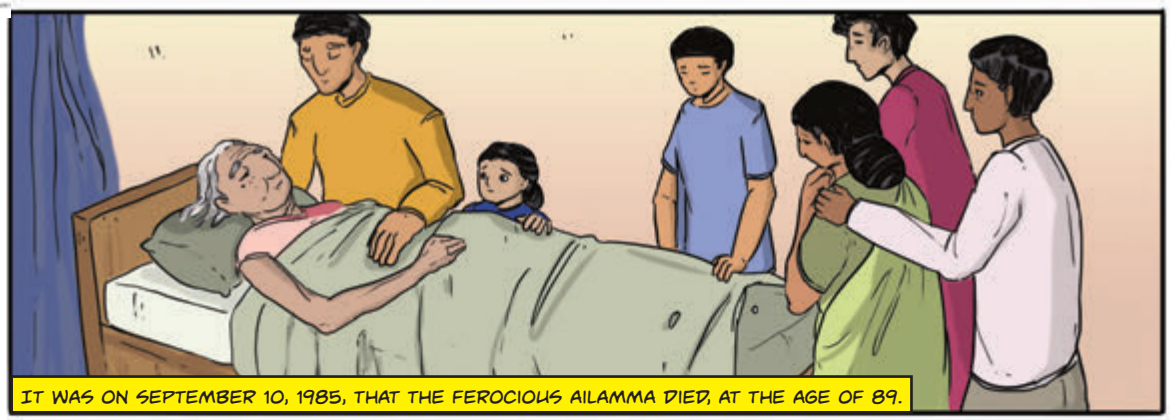
*DOMINANT CASTE LANDLORDS


AT THE AGE OF 11, SHE WAS MARRIED OFF TO CHITYALA NARSAIAH IN PALAKURTHY. TOGETHER, THEY HAD SIX CHILDREN.
ILAMMA USED TO WASH CLOTHES OF MANY VILLAGERS AND DO FREE AND FORCED LABOUR FOR DOMINANT CASTES.
BUT EVEN THIS WASN'T ENOUGH TO FEED SUCH A LARGE FAMILY MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO SURVIVE.
TO MAKE ENDS MEET, ILAMMA DECIDED TO TAKE UP FARMING.
SHE LEASED LAND FROM A NEIGHBOURING VILLAGE'S LANDLORD FAMILY.

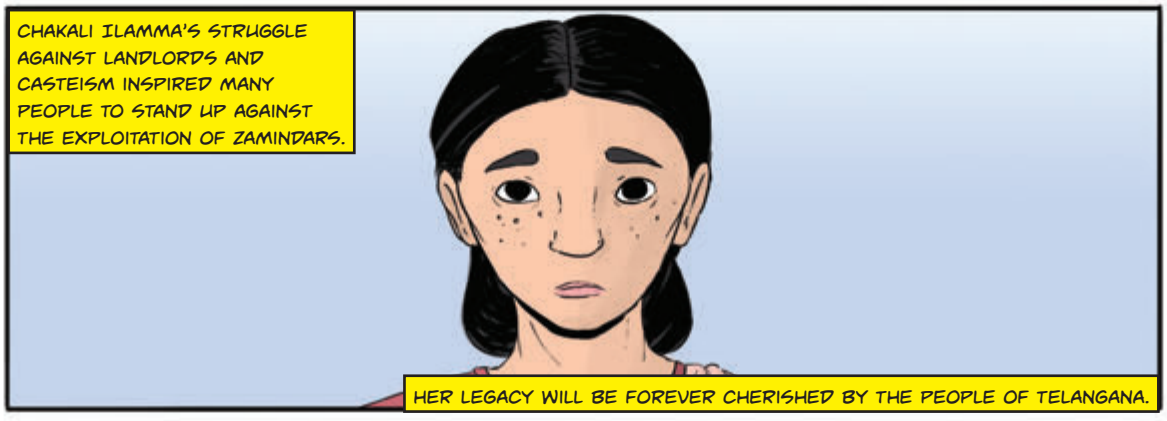
*VILLAGE ACCOUNTANT WHO MAINTAINED LAND RECORDS


WITH THEIR HELP, SHE FOUGHT AGAINST THOSE GOONS.
THIS IS MY LAND. THIS IS MY CROP. WHO ARE YOU TO TAKE OVER MY LAND AND CROP? IT IS ONLY POSSIBLE FOR YOU WHEN I DIE.
THE BATTLE WAS UGLY AND IT LED TO THE DEATH OF ONE OF HER SONS.
HER HUSBAND AND TWO OTHER SONS WERE ALSO JAILED IN NALGONDA LEAVING CHAKALI ILAMMA DISTRESSED AND HELPLESS.
BUT SHE STOOD HER GROUND AND FOUGHT AGAINST RAMACHANDRA REDDY.
SHE FOUGHT FOR HER RIGHT TO LAND IN A LOCAL COURT AND WON THE CASE!
SHE REALISED THAT HER COMMUNITY FACED ATROCITIES EVERYDAY AND SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT IT.
SO, SHE DECIDED TO TAKE MATTERS INTO HER OWN HANDS.

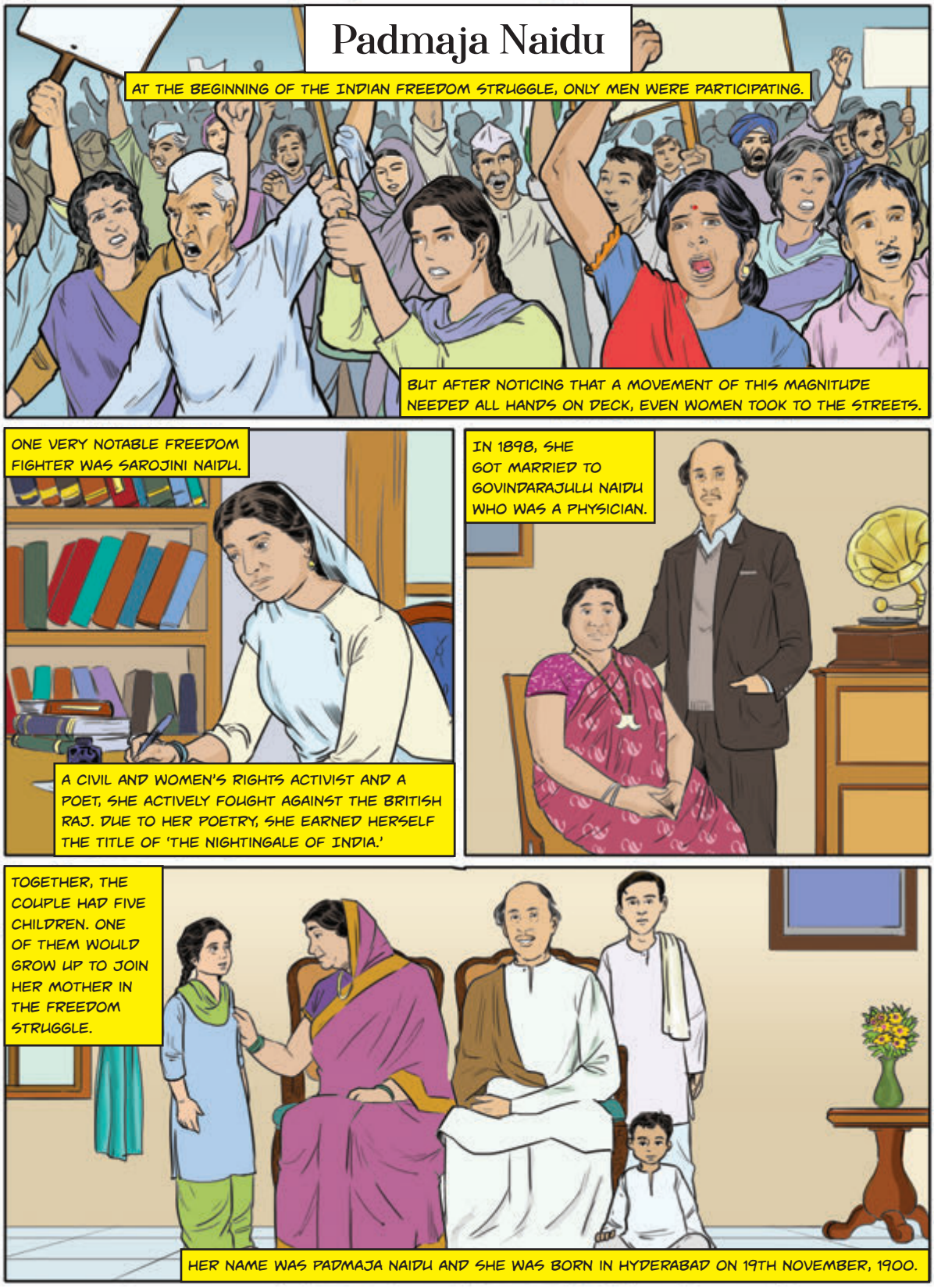
SHE JOINED THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI) AND WAS AN ACTIVE MEMBER.
SHE DESTROYED THE PATWARI'S HOUSE AND SET UP A CORNFIELD ON THE SAME LAND.
AND WITH THE HELP OF THE CPI, SHE REDISTRIBUTED THE CROP AND WEALTH TO THE OPPRESSED.
SHE DIDN'T STOP THERE EITHER. SHE WENT ON TO JOIN THE TELANGANA ARMED REBELLION.
TOGETHER, THEY WENT AGAINST LANDLORDS AND THE NIZAM'S 'RAZAKARS' ARMY IN 1947.
SOON, HER HOUSE BECAME A CENTRE FOR ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED AGAINST THE FEUDAL LANDLORDS WHO COLLABORATED WITH THE NIZAM.


IT WAS ON SEPTEMBER 10, 1985, THAT THE FEROCIOUS AILAMMA DIED, AT THE AGE OF 89.

HER LEGACY IS NOW BEING ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE PEOPLE OF TELANGANA.
A STATUE HAS BEEN INSTALLED IN HYDERABAD TO REMIND PEOPLE OF HER FEROCIOUS BATTLE AGAINST THE TYRANNICAL ZAMINDARS.

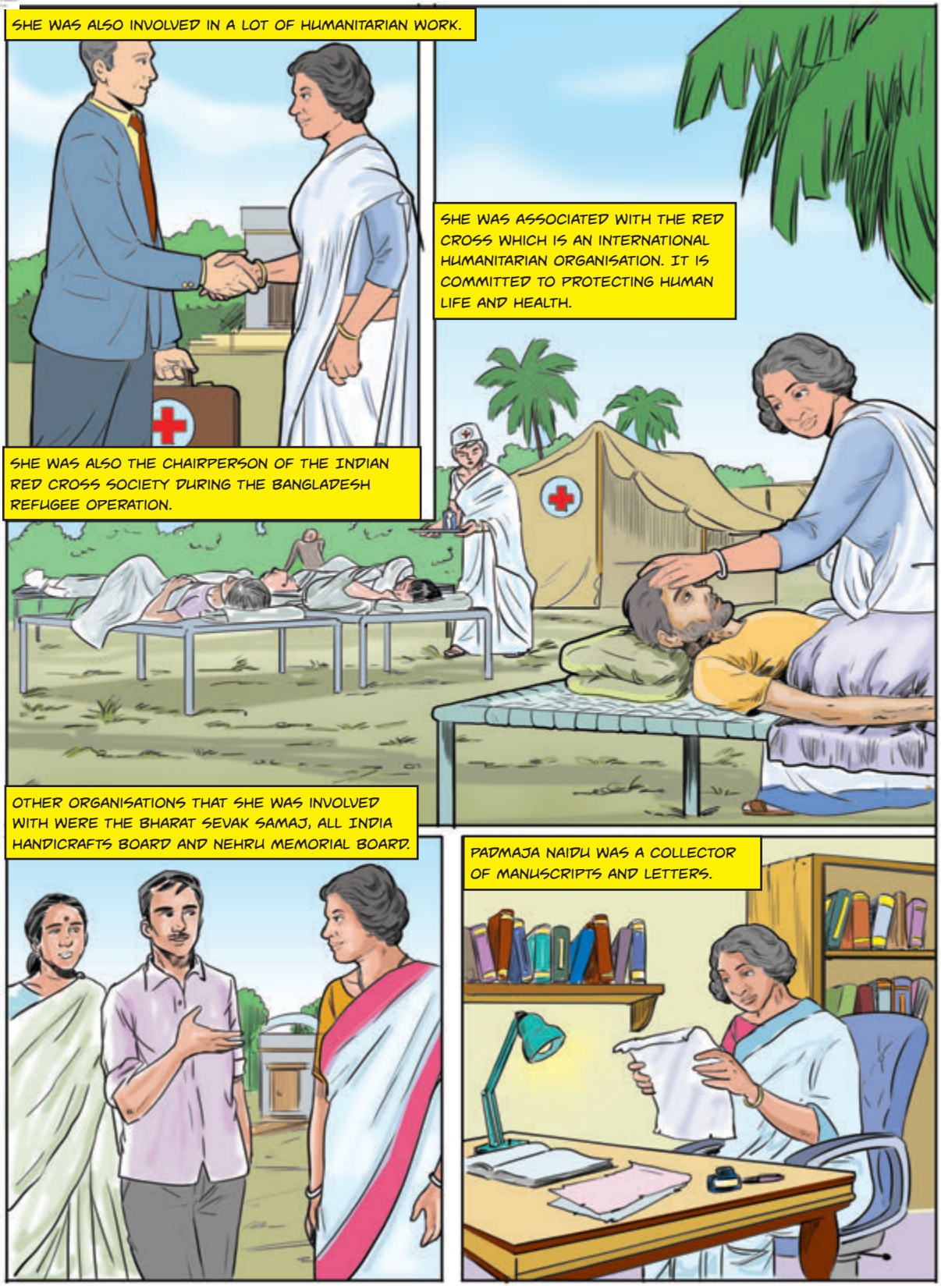

CHAKALI ILAMMA'S STRUGGLE AGAINST LANDLORDS AND CASTEISM INSPIRED MANY PEOPLE TO STAND UP AGAINST THE EXPLOITATION OF ZAMINDARS.
HER LEGACY WILL BE FOREVER CHERISHED BY THE PEOPLE OF TELANGANA.

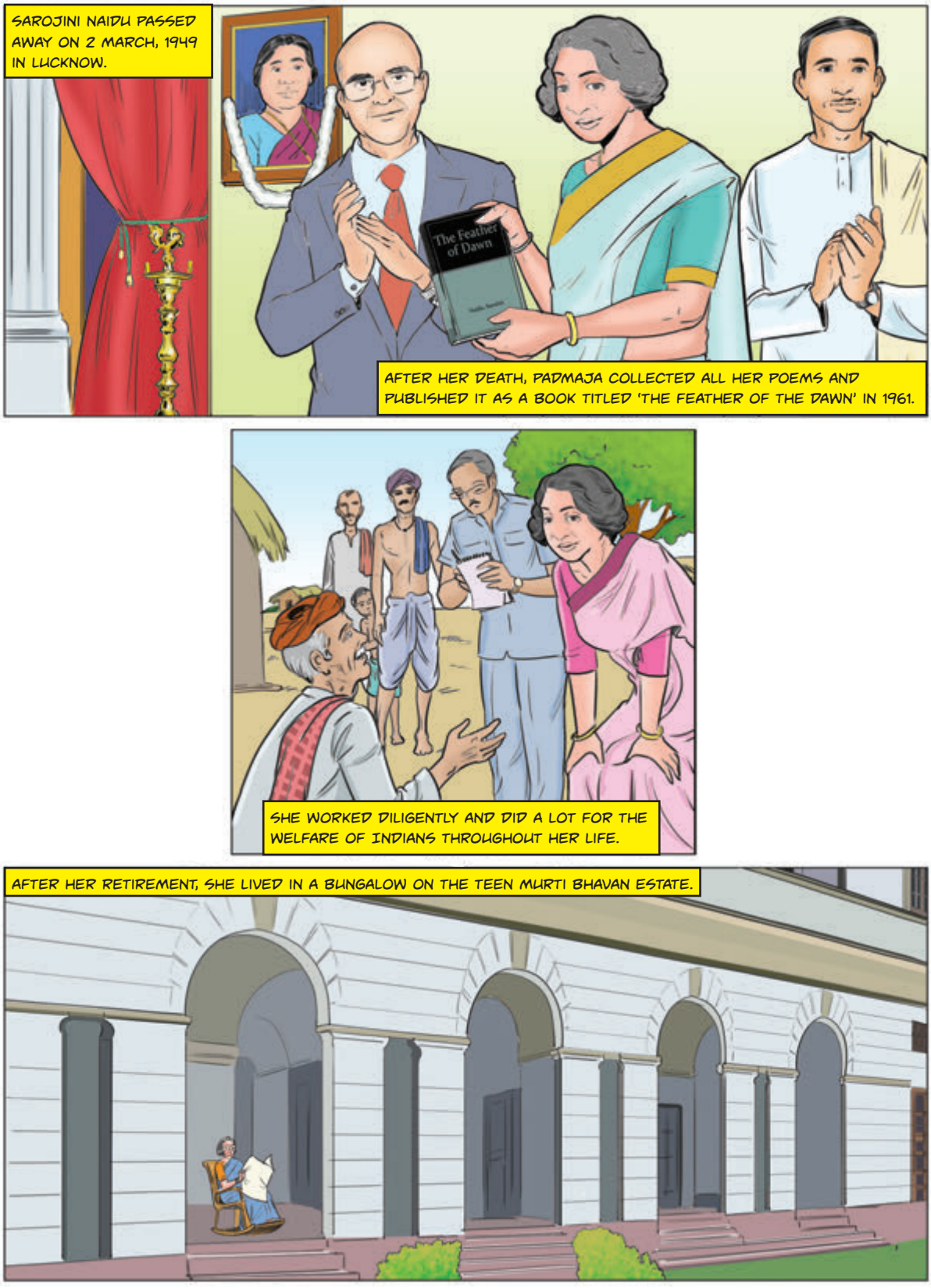
Padmaja Naidu

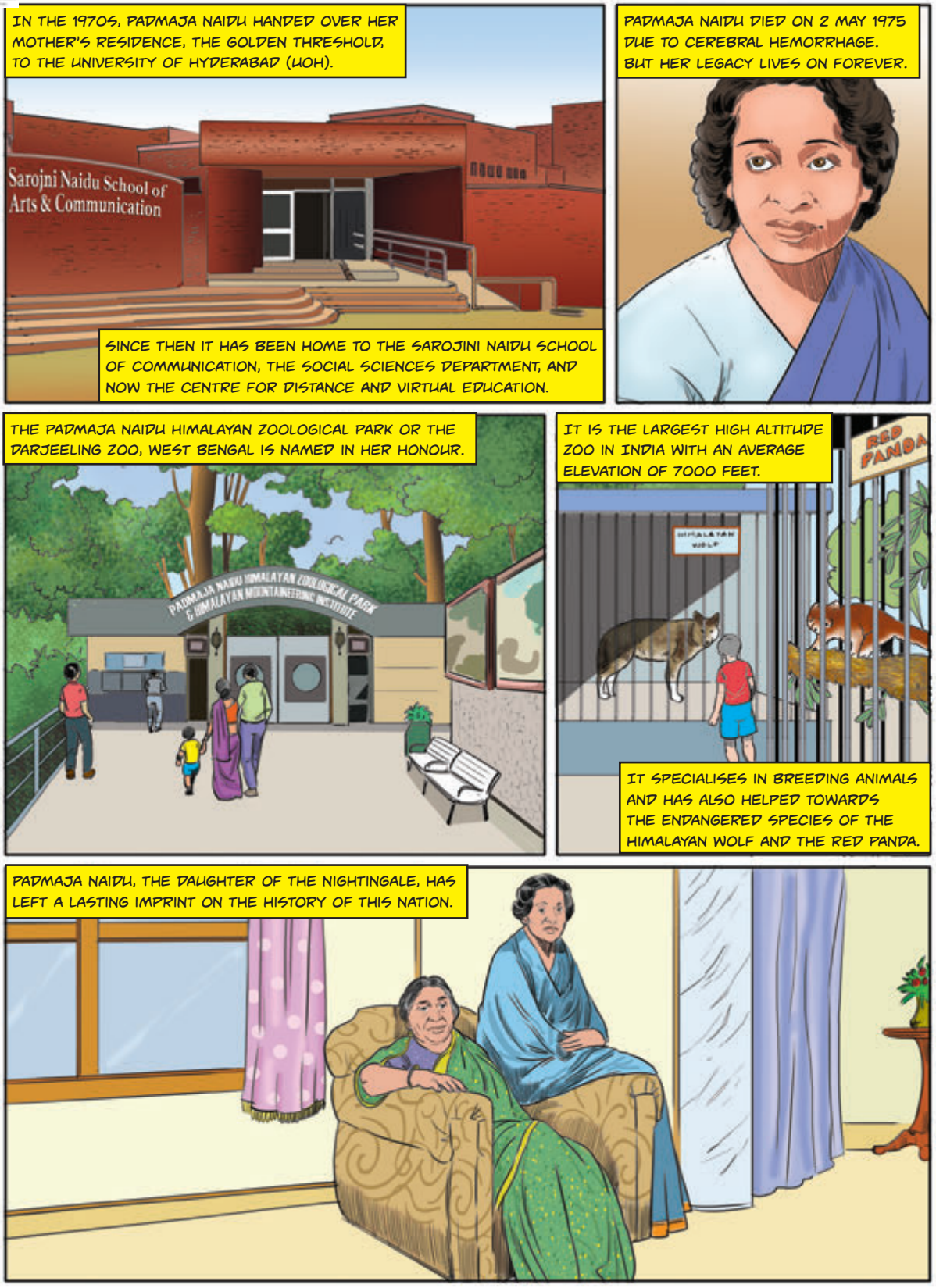


SINCE CHILDHOOD, PADMAJA USED TO WATCH HER MOTHER TAKE PART IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND HOPED TO WALK IN HER SHOES SOMEDAY.
AS A YOUNG CHILD, SHE WAS ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY FREEDOM FIGHTERS.
ONE OF HER CLOSEST CHILDHOOD FRIENDS WAS RATTANBAI PETIT OR RUTTIE PETIT WHO WOULD LATER ON MARRY MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH, THE FATHER OF PAKISTAN.
PADMAJA WAS ONLY TWENTY-ONE WHEN SHE ENTERED POLITICS.
IN NO TIME, SHE BECAME THE JOINT FOUNDER OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF HYDERABAD.
MAHATMA GANDHIJI'S SPEECHES ALSO INFLUENCED HER TO ADOPT POLITICAL ACTIVISM.
SHE SPREAD GANDHIJI'S MESSAGE AND ALSO ENCOURAGED INDIANS TO BOYCOTT FOREIGN GOODS.

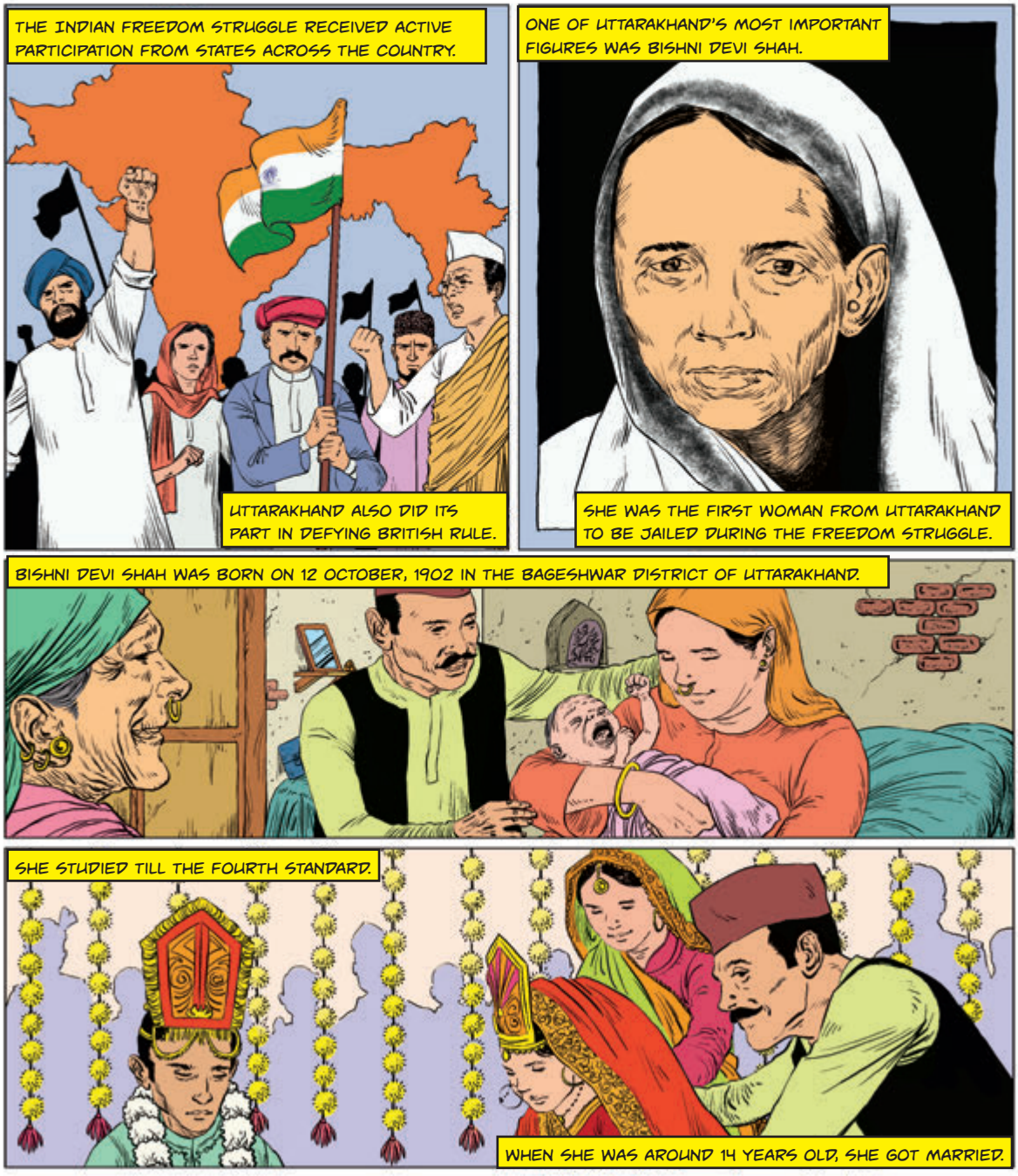
IN THE 1942 QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT, GANDHIJI DEMANDED FOR AN ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL OF THE BRITISH FROM INDIA.
QUIT INDIA!
PADMAJA NAIDU LED THE STRUGGLE FROM HYDERABAD.
THERE, IN AN ACT OF COURAGE, SHE PLACED THE CONGRESS FLAG ON A RESIDENCY BUILDING.
SHE WAS ARRESTED FOR THIS AND PUT IN JAIL.
POST INDEPENDENCE IN 1950, PADMAJA NAIDU WAS ELECTED TO THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT, A POST THAT SHE HAD TO RESIGN FROM DUE TO ILLNESS.
HOWEVER, IN 1956 SHE WAS APPOINTED THE GOVERNOR OF WEST BENGAL, A POSITION SHE HELD FOR TEN YEARS AND 209 DAYS, MAKING HER THE LONGEST FEMALE GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.


SHE WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN A LOT OF HUMANITARIAN WORK.
SHE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RED CROSS WHICH IS AN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION. IT IS COMMITTED TO PROTECTING HUMAN LIFE AND HEALTH.
SHE WAS ALSO THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY DURING THE BANGLADESH REFUGEE OPERATION.
OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT SHE WAS INVOLVED WITH WERE THE BHARAT SEVAK SAMAJ, ALL INDIA HANDICRAFTS BOARD AND NEHRU MEMORIAL BOARD.
PADMAJA NAIDU WAS A COLLECTOR OF MANUSCRIPTS AND LETTERS.

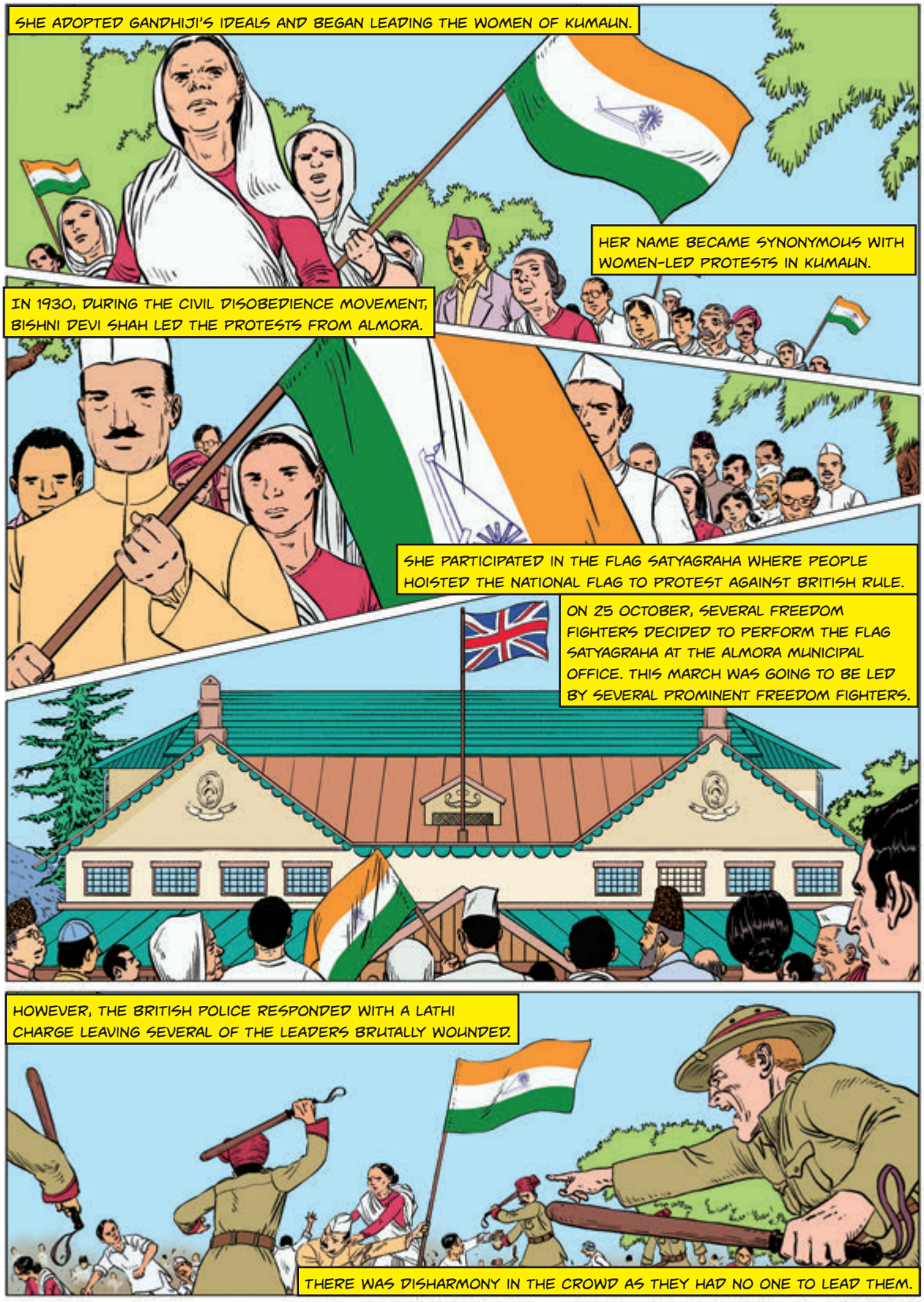

SAROJINI NAIDU PASSED AWAY ON 2 MARCH, 1949 IN LUCKNOW.
The Feather of Dawn
AFTER HER DEATH, PADMAJA COLLECTED ALL HER POEMS AND PUBLISHED IT AS A BOOK TITLED 'THE FEATHER OF THE DAWN' IN 1961.
SHE WORKED DILIGENTLY AND DID A LOT FOR THE WELFARE OF INDIANS THROUGHOUT HER LIFE.
AFTER HER RETIREMENT, SHE LIVED IN A BUNGALOW ON THE TEEN MURTI BHAVAN ESTATE.

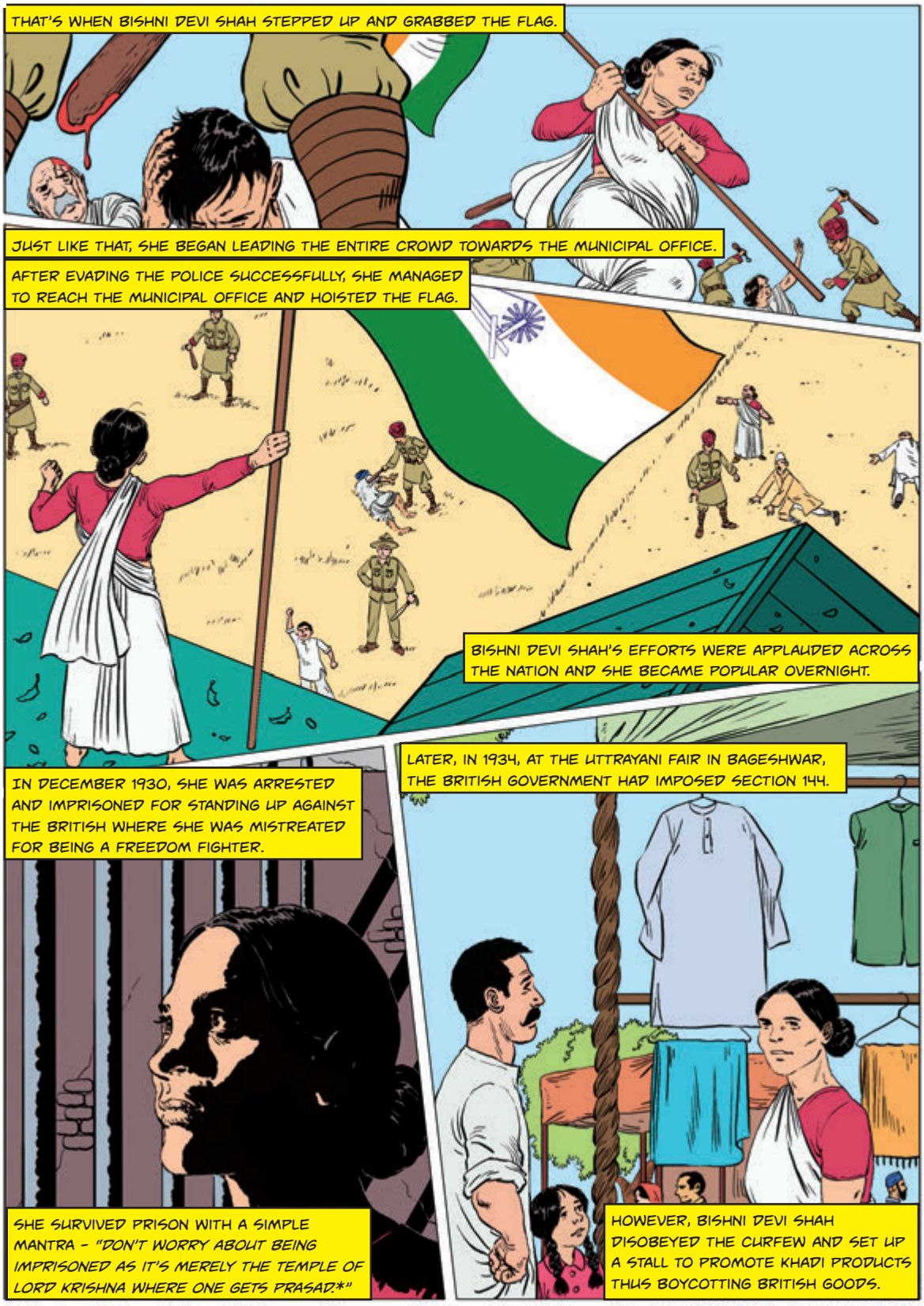

IN THE 1970S, PADMAJA NAIDU HANDED OVER HER MOTHER'S RESIDENCE, THE GOLDEN THRESHOLD, TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD (UOH).
Sarojni Naidu School of Arts & Communication
SINCE THEN IT HAS BEEN HOME TO THE SAROJINI NAIDU SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION, THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT, AND NOW THE CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND VIRTUAL EDUCATION.
PADMAJA NAIDU DIED ON 2 MAY 1975 DUE TO CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE. BUT HER LEGACY LIVES ON FOREVER.
THE PADMAJA NAIDU HIMALAYAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK OR THE DARJEELING ZOO, WEST BENGAL IS NAMED IN HER HONOUR.
PADMAJA NAIDU HIMALAYAN ZOOLOGICAL PARK & HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINEERING INSTITUTE
IT IS THE LARGEST HIGH ALTITUDE ZOO IN INDIA WITH AN AVERAGE ELEVATION OF 7000 FEET.
RED PANDA
HIMALAYAN WOLF
IT SPECIALISES IN BREEDING ANIMALS AND HAS ALSO HELPED TOWARDS THE ENDANGERED SPECIES OF THE HIMALAYAN WOLF AND THE RED PANDA.
PADMAJA NAIDU, THE DAUGHTER OF THE NIGHTINGALE, HAS LEFT A LASTING IMPRINT ON THE HISTORY OF THIS NATION.

Bishni Devi Shah



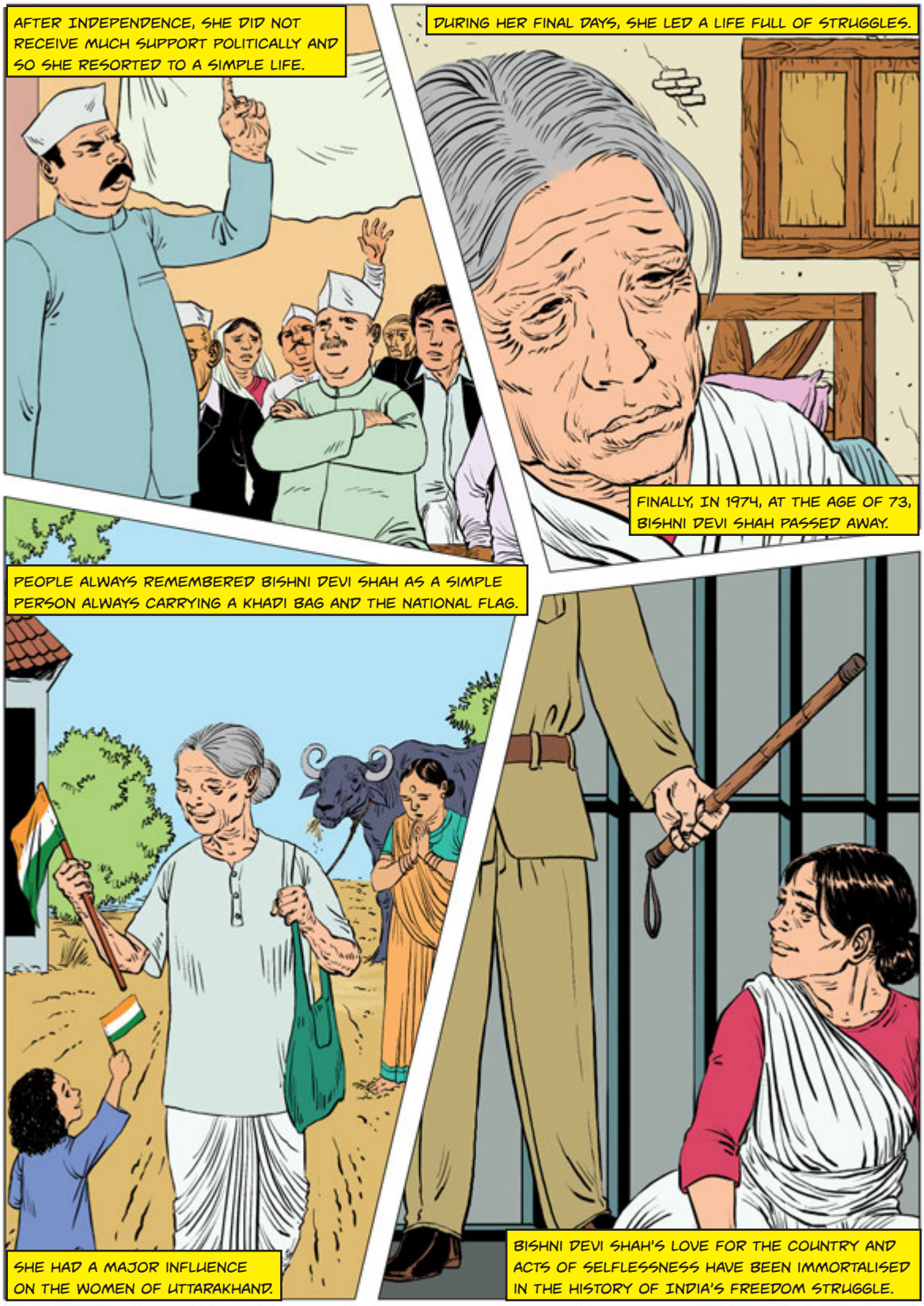
UNFORTUNATELY, WITHIN 2 YEARS, HER HUSBAND PASSED AWAY DUE TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.
SHAH FELT EXTREMELY ALONE AND HELPLESS AS SHE HAD NO ONE TO LIVE FOR.
IT WAS WHEN SHE WAS 19 THAT SHE TOOK NOTICE OF THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
DURING THAT TIME, ALMORA WAS A HOTBED OF PROTEST WITH SEVERAL GATHERINGS, DEBATES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES CONSTANTLY BEING ORGANISED.
SIMON, GO BACK
SIMON, GO BACK
EVENTUALLY, SHAH STARTED PARTICIPATING IN THESE ACTIVITIES AS WELL.
IN 1929, GANDHIJI TRAVELLED AROUND THE COUNTRY TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
HE ALSO VISITED NAINITAL IN KUMAUN. THERE, HIS SPEECH INFLUENCED BISHNI DEVI SHAH AND IGNITED A FIERY PASSION IN HER.


SHE ADOPTED GANDHIJI'S IDEALS AND BEGAN LEADING THE WOMEN OF KUMAUN.
HER NAME BECAME SYNONYMOUS WITH WOMEN-LED PROTESTS IN KUMAUN.
IN 1930, DURING THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT, BISHNI DEVI SHAH LED THE PROTESTS FROM ALMORA.
SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE FLAG SATYAGRAHA WHERE PEOPLE HOISTED THE NATIONAL FLAG TO PROTEST AGAINST BRITISH RULE.
ON 25 OCTOBER, SEVERAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS DECIDED TO PERFORM THE FLAG SATYAGRAHA AT THE ALMORA MUNICIPAL OFFICE. THIS MARCH WAS GOING TO BE LED BY SEVERAL PROMINENT FREEDOM FIGHTERS.
HOWEVER, THE BRITISH POLICE RESPONDED WITH A LATHI CHARGE LEAVING SEVERAL OF THE LEADERS BRUTALLY WOUNDED.
THERE WAS DISHARMONY IN THE CROWD AS THEY HAD NO ONE TO LEAD THEM.

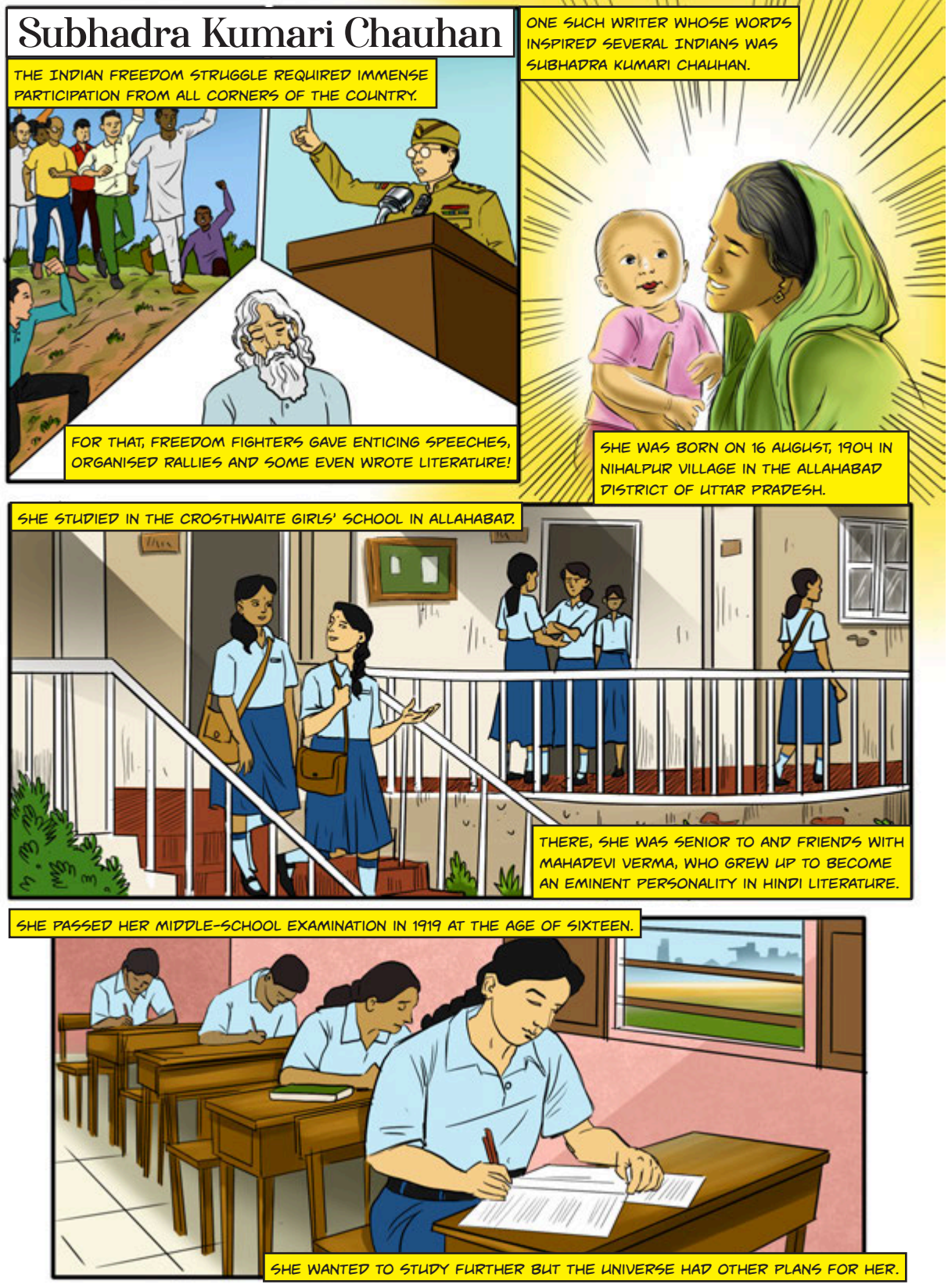


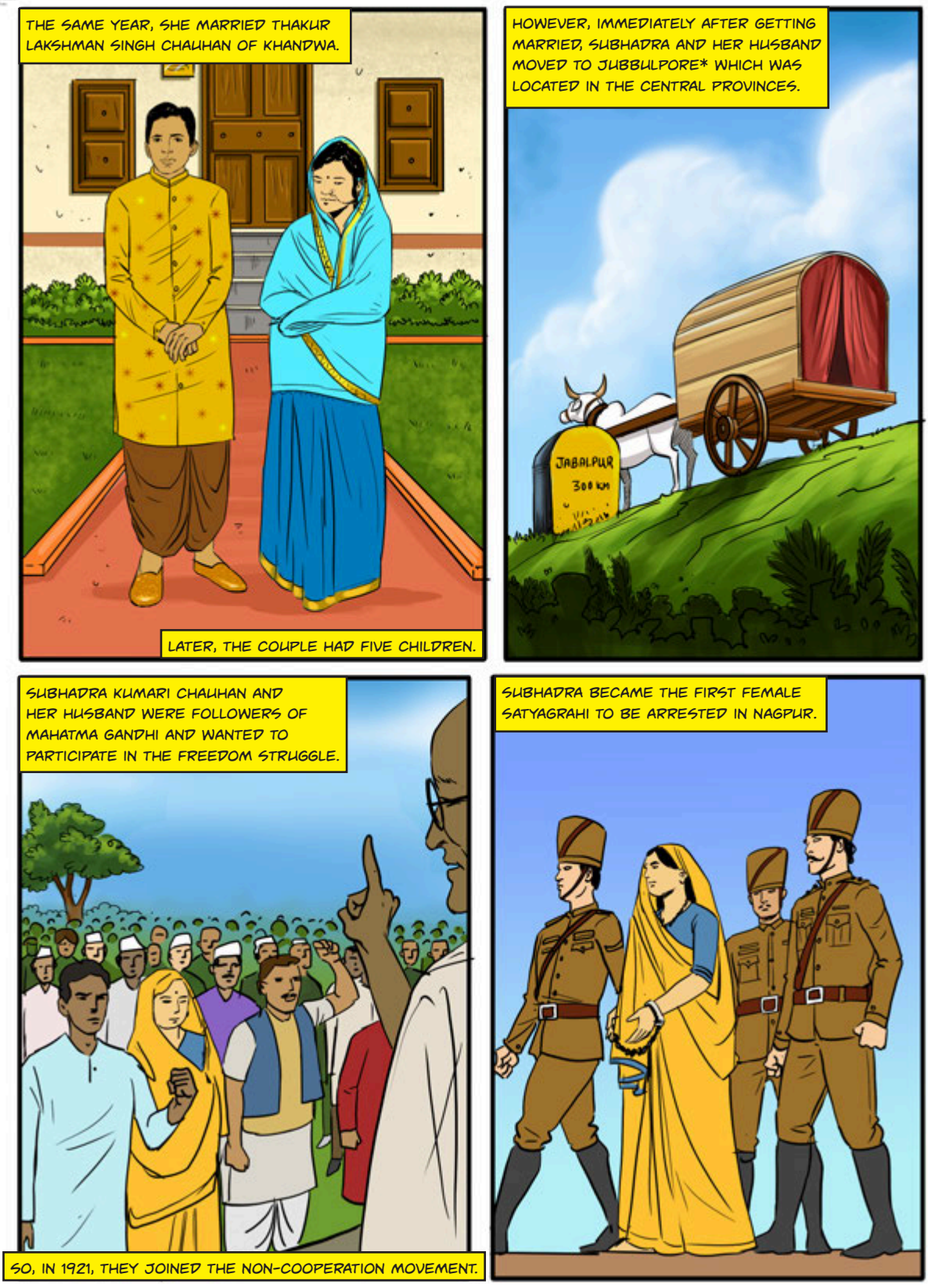
*BLESSED FOOD

THE SAME YEAR, A CONGRESS MEET WAS ORGANISED IN RANIKHET WHERE BISHNI DEVI SHAH WAS ELECTED AS THE FEMALE VOLUNTEER.
ON 26 JANUARY, 1940, WITH THE NATIONAL FLAG HELD HIGH, SHE LED THE SATYAGRAHA IN ALMORA.
IN 1942, SHE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT.
LATER, SHE LED THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE RELEASE OF PROMINENT FREEDOM FIGHTERS.
ON 15 AUGUST 1947, WHEN INDIA BECAME FREE, SHE WAS ONE OF THE LEADING FEMALE FIGURES WHO LED THE CELEBRATIONS AND HOISTED THE NATIONAL FLAG.

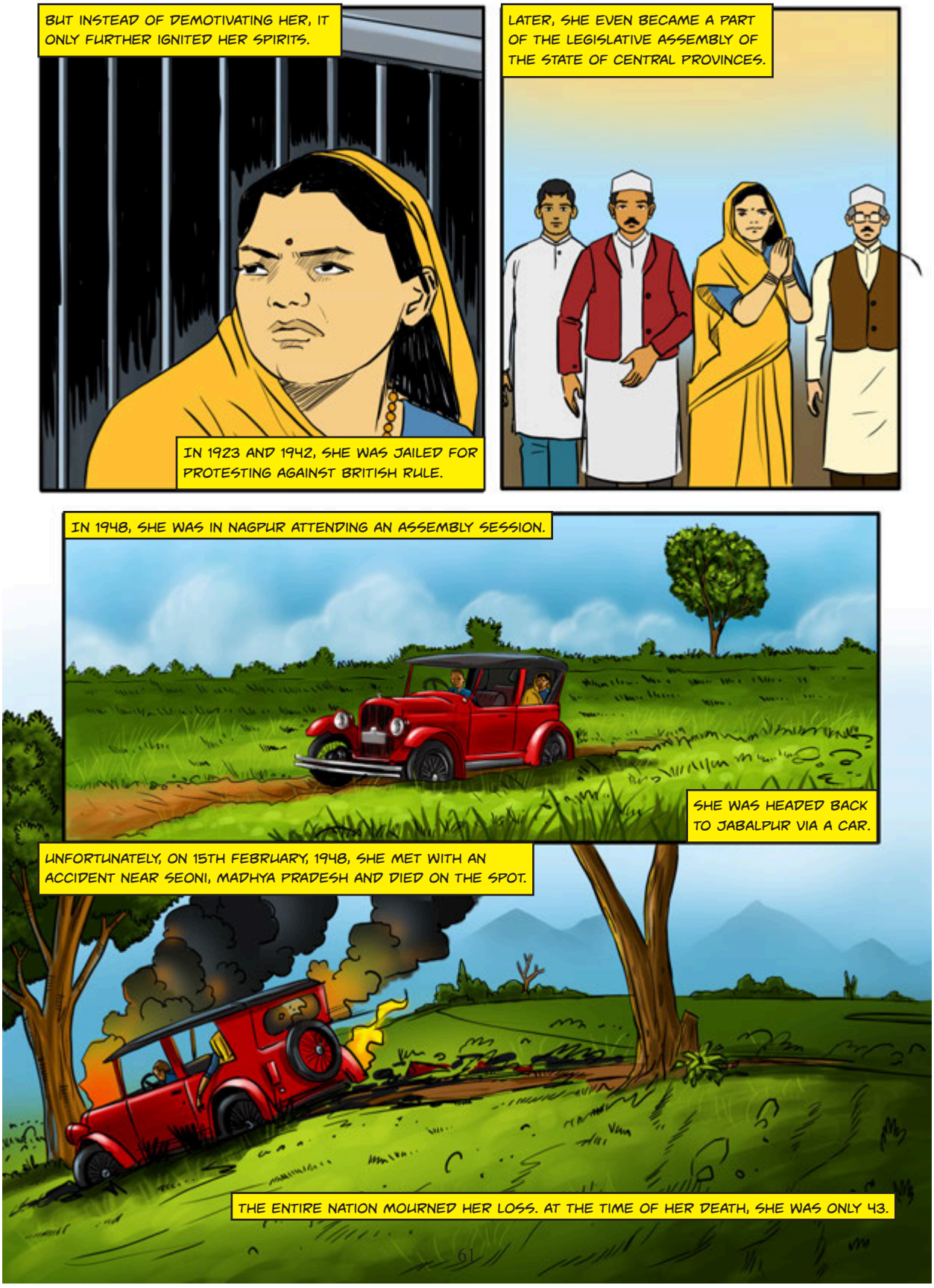

AFTER INDEPENDENCE, SHE DID NOT RECEIVE MUCH SUPPORT POLITICALLY AND SO SHE RESORTED TO A SIMPLE LIFE.
DURING HER FINAL DAYS, SHE LED A LIFE FULL OF STRUGGLES.
FINALLY, IN 1974, AT THE AGE OF 73, BISHNI DEVI SHAH PASSED AWAY.
PEOPLE ALWAYS REMEMBERED BISHNI DEVI SHAH AS A SIMPLE PERSON ALWAYS CARRYING A KHADI BAG AND THE NATIONAL FLAG.
SHE HAD A MAJOR INFLUENCE ON THE WOMEN OF UTTARAKHAND.
BISHNI DEVI SHAH'S LOVE FOR THE COUNTRY AND ACTS OF SELFLESSNESS HAVE BEEN IMMORTALISED IN THE HISTORY OF INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE.

Subhadra Kumari Chauhan





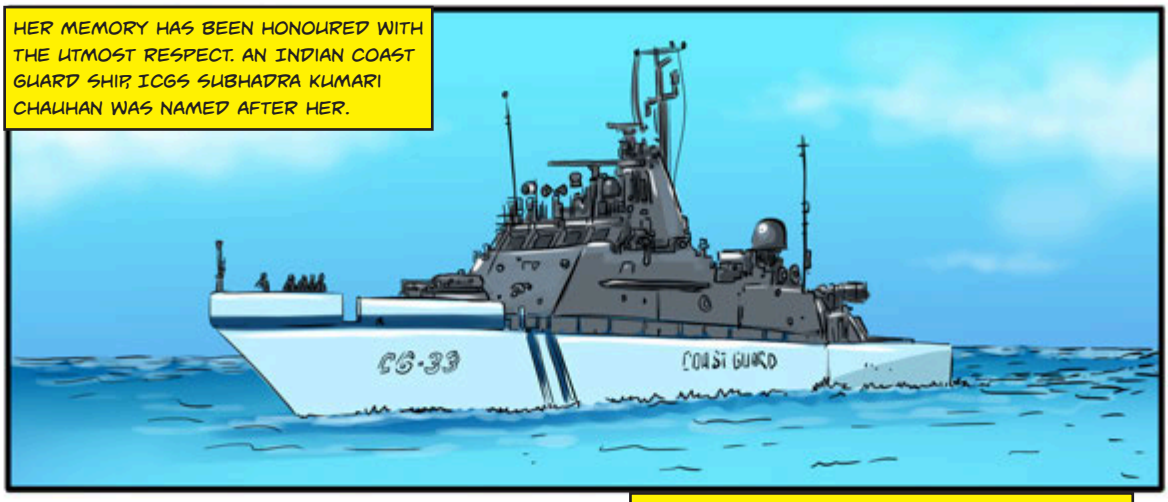
*PRESENT-DAY JABALPUR


BUT INSTEAD OF DEMOTIVATING HER, IT ONLY FURTHER IGNITED HER SPIRITS.
IN 1923 AND 1942, SHE WAS JAILED FOR PROTESTING AGAINST BRITISH RULE.
LATER, SHE EVEN BECAME A PART OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF CENTRAL PROVINCES.
IN 1948, SHE WAS IN NAGPUR ATTENDING AN ASSEMBLY SESSION.
SHE WAS HEADED BACK TO JABALPUR VIA A CAR.
UNFORTUNATELY, ON 15TH FEBRUARY, 1948, SHE MET WITH AN ACCIDENT NEAR SEONI, MADHYA PRADESH AND DIED ON THE SPOT.
THE ENTIRE NATION MOURNED HER LOSS. AT THE TIME OF HER DEATH, SHE WAS ONLY 43.

SUBHADRA WAS REALLY FOND OF POETRY AND THROUGHOUT HER LIFE SHE RELEASED SEVERAL HINDI POETRY.
SHE WROTE IN THE KHARIBOLI DIALECT OF HINDI. HER STYLE WAS SIMPLE AND CLEAR.
SHE MAINLY WROTE HEROIC POEMS BUT OTHER THAN THAT SOME OF HER WORKS WERE ALSO MEANT FOR CHILDREN.
HER MOST POPULAR WORK WAS 'JHANSI KI RANI' WHICH WAS AN EMOTIONALLY MOVING POEM ABOUT THE LIFE OF RANI LAKSHMI BAI.
IT TALKS ABOUT HER PARTICIPATION IN THE 1857 REVOLUTION. IT IS A TALE OF COURAGE AND BRAVERY.
IT IS ONE OF THE MOST RECITED AND SUNG POEMS IN HINDI LITERATURE AND IS TAUGHT IN SEVERAL SCHOOLS IN INDIA.

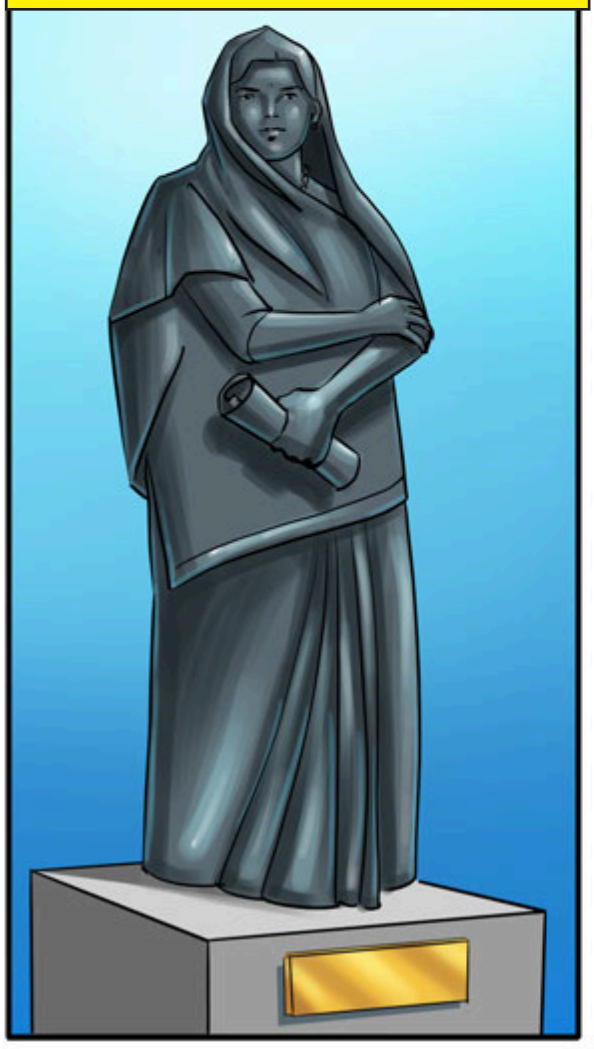
THE THRONES SHOOK AND ROYALTIES SCOWLED
OLD INDIA WAS RE-INVIGORATED WITH NEW YOUTH
PEOPLE REALISED THE VALUE OF LOST FREEDOM
EVERYBODY WAS DETERMINED TO THROW THE FOREIGNERS OUT
THE OLD SWORD GLISTENED AGAIN IN 1857
THIS STORY WE HEARD FROM THE MOUTHS OF BUNDEL BARDS
LIKE A MAN SHE FOUGHT, SHE WAS THE QUEEN OF JHANSI
झाँसी की रानी
सिंहासन हिल उठे राजवंशों ने भृकुटी तानी थी,
बूढ़े भारत में भी आई फिर से नयी जवानी थी,
गुमी हुई आज़ादी की कीमत सबने पहचानी थी,
दूर फिरंगी को करने की सबने मन में ठानी थी।
चमक उठी सन सत्तावन में, वह तलवार पुरानी थी,
बुंदेले हरबोलों के मुँह हमने सुनी कहानी थी,
खूब लड़ी मर्दानी वह तो झाँसी वाली रानी थी।।
OTHER THAN THAT, SHE WROTE OTHER POEMS SUCH AS 'JALLIANWALA BAGH MEIN VASANT', 'VEERON KA KAISA HO BASANT', 'RAKHI KI CHUNAUTI', AND 'VIDA'.
THEY TALKED ABOUT THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN DETAIL.
APART FROM SPREADING AWARENESS AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC, HER POEMS MANAGED TO INSPIRE SEVERAL YOUTHS TO TAKE PART IN THE INDIAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT.

HER MEMORY HAS BEEN HONOURED WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT. AN INDIAN COAST GUARD SHIP, ICGS SUBHADRA KUMARI CHAUHAN WAS NAMED AFTER HER.



TO FURTHER COMMEMORATE HER, IN 1976, INDIA POST RELEASED A POSTAGE STAMP OF HER.

IN THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OFFICE OF JABALPUR, A STATUE OF SUBHADRA KUMARI CHAUHAN STANDS TALL.



SUBHADRA KUMARI CHAUHAN'S POETRY ECHOES THROUGH MODERN INDIAN CLASSROOMS AND IS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF HISTORICAL PROGRESS.

HER WORK WILL ENCOURAGE FUTURE GENERATIONS TO STAND UP AGAINST SOCIAL INJUSTICES. SHE IS TRULY A REMARKABLE INDIAN HERO.

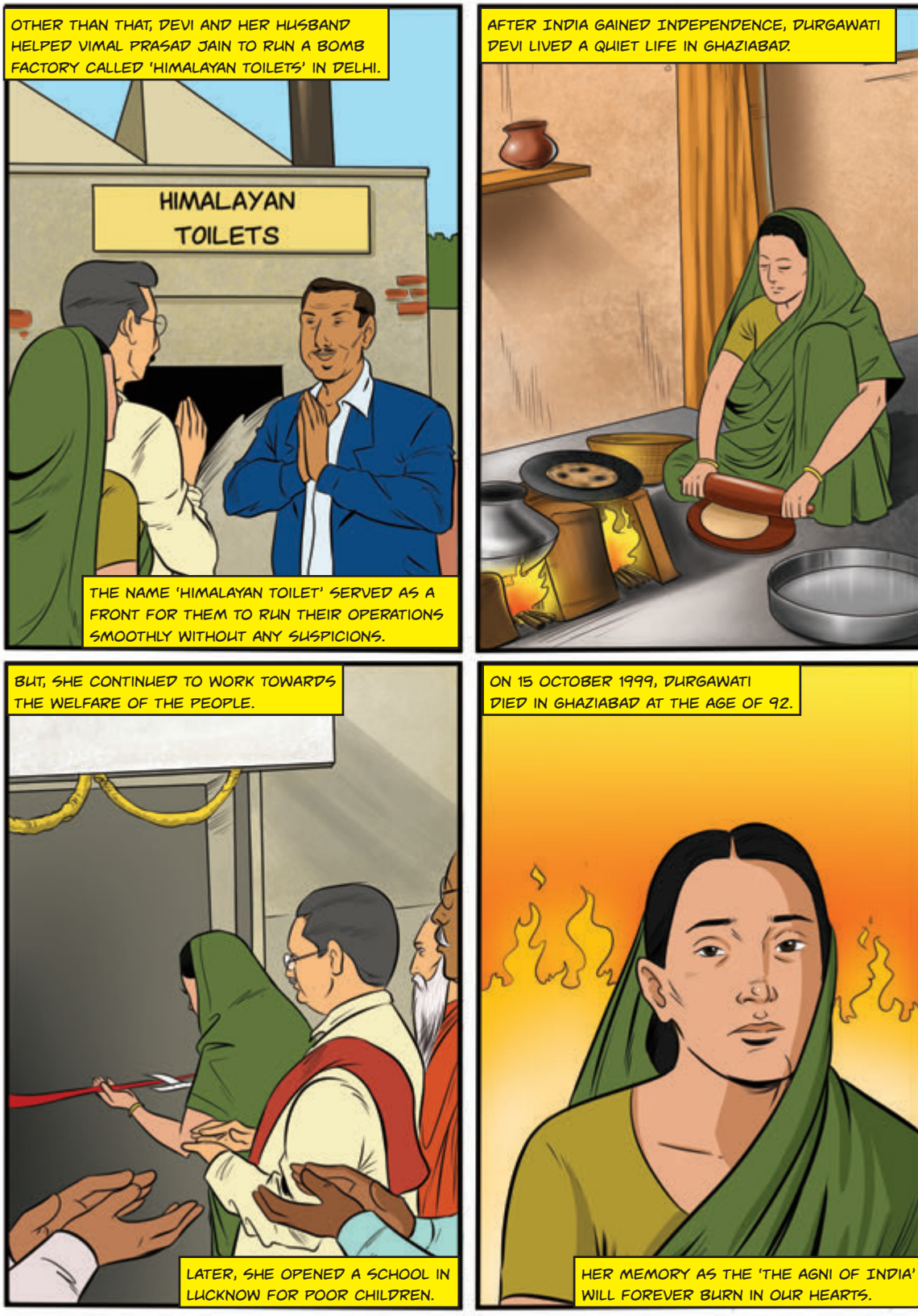
Durgawati Devi

ON DECEMBER 17, 1927, FREEDOM FIGHTERS, BHAGAT SINGH AND SHIVARAM RAJGURU ASSASSINATED THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, J. P. SAUNDERS.
DEVI PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING THEM ESCAPE AFTER THE ASSASSINATION.
TWO DAYS AFTER THE ASSASSINATION, ANOTHER FREEDOM FIGHTER, SUKHDEV, CALLED DEVI FOR HER HELP. HE HAD EVEN BROUGHT A FRIEND ALONG WHOM DEVI DIDN'T RECOGNISE.
THAT FRIEND REVEALED HIMSELF TO BE BHAGAT SINGH WHO HAD CREATED A DISGUISE BY SHAVING HIS BEARD, CUTTING HIS HAIR SHORT AND DRESSING IN WESTERN ATTIRE.
SUKHDEV'S PLAN WAS SIMPLE...
IF YOU, WHO KNOWS BHAGAT SO WELL, COULDN'T RECOGNISE HIM, THERE'S NO WAY THE POLICE WILL!
THEY'LL BE BUSY SEARCHING FOR A BEARDED SIKH MAN.
THE NEXT MORNING, THEY WOKE UP EARLY TO CATCH A TRAIN FOR KOLKATA.

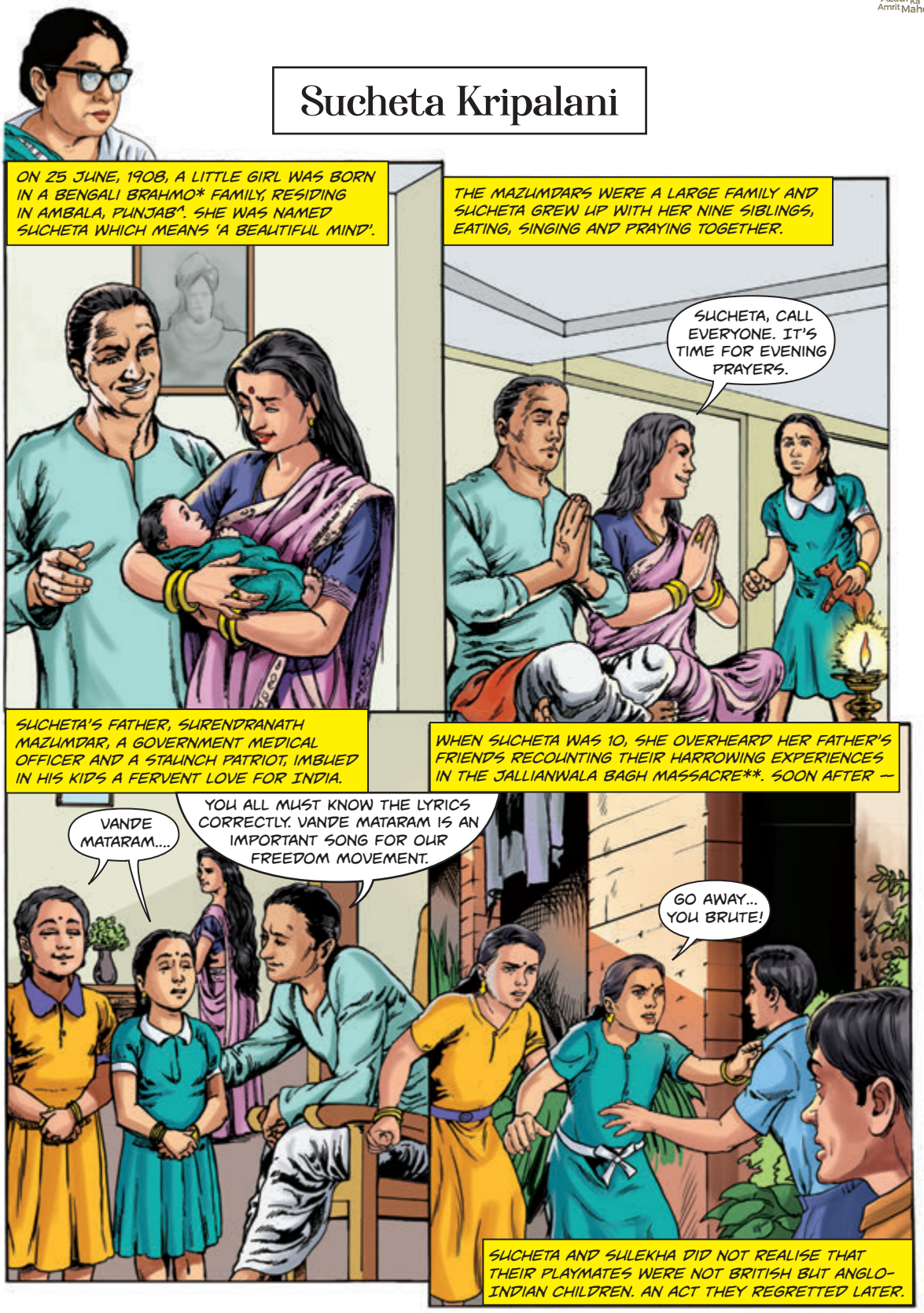
BHAGAT SINGH BOUGHT TWO FIRST CLASS TICKETS FOR HIMSELF AND ONE THIRD CLASS TICKET FOR RAJGURU.
SO FAR, NO ONE HAD RECOGNISED THEM.
DEVI POSED AS BHAGAT SINGH'S WIFE AND PUT HER SON SACHIN ON HER LAP.
RAJGURU POSED AS THEIR SERVANT WHO WAS CARRYING THEIR LUGGAGE.
AS AN EXTRA PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE, BOTH THE MEN ALSO CARRIED LOADED REVOLVERS.
THEY ALSO KEPT A LOW-KEY PROFILE TO AVOID RAISING ANY SUSPICIONS.
DURING THAT TIME, THE CID AT THE HOWRAH RAILWAY STATION USED TO SCRUTINISE PASSENGERS FROM THE LAHORE TRAIN.

SO, BHAGAT SINGH, DURGAWATI DEVI AND RAJGURU FELT IT BEST TO BREAK THE JOURNEY AT KANPUR WHERE THEY DECIDED TO BOARD A TRAIN FOR LUCKNOW.
WHEN THEY REACHED LUCKNOW, RAJGURU DEPARTED SEPARATELY FOR BENARES WHILE THE REST OF THEM LEFT FOR HOWRAH.
A FEW DAYS LATER, DURGAWATI DEVI RETURNED TO LAHORE WITH HER CHILD.
IN 1929, JATINDRA NATH DAS DIED FROM A 63-DAY JAIL HUNGER STRIKE WHILE DEMANDING EQUALITY FOR INDIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS WITH THOSE FROM EUROPE.
IT WAS DEVI WHO LED THE FUNERAL PROCESSION FROM LAHORE TO CALCUTTA.
HUGE CROWDS JOINED THE PROCESSION ALONG THE WAY.

IN 1929, BHAGAT SINGH THREW A BOMB AT THE CENTRAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN DELHI.
HE LATER SURRENDERED HIMSELF.
LATER, DURGAWATI DEVI TRIED TO ASSASSINATE LORD HAILEY, THE FORMER GOVERNOR OF PUNJAB, BUT HE MANAGED TO SUCCESSFULLY ESCAPE.
HOWEVER, MANY OF HIS ASSOCIATES DIED IN THE PROCESS.
DURING THIS TIME, DURGAWATI DEVI HAD ALSO SOLD HER ORNAMENTS WHICH WERE WORTH RS. 3,000 TO RESCUE BHAGAT SINGH AND OTHERS FROM TRIAL.
EVENTUALLY, FOR HER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT, THE POLICE CAUGHT HER AND IMPRISONED HER FOR THREE YEARS.


OTHER THAN THAT, DEVI AND HER HUSBAND HELPED VIMAL PRASAD JAIN TO RUN A BOMB FACTORY CALLED 'HIMALAYAN TOILETS' IN DELHI.
HIMALAYAN TOILETS
THE NAME 'HIMALAYAN TOILET' SERVED AS A FRONT FOR THEM TO RUN THEIR OPERATIONS SMOOTHLY WITHOUT ANY SUSPICIONS.
AFTER INDIA GAINED INDEPENDENCE, DURGAWATI DEVI LIVED A QUIET LIFE IN GHAZIABAD.
BUT, SHE CONTINUED TO WORK TOWARDS THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE.
LATER, SHE OPENED A SCHOOL IN LUCKNOW FOR POOR CHILDREN.
ON 15 OCTOBER 1999, DURGAWATI DIED IN GHAZIABAD AT THE AGE OF 92.
HER MEMORY AS THE 'THE AGNI OF INDIA' WILL FOREVER BURN IN OUR HEARTS.

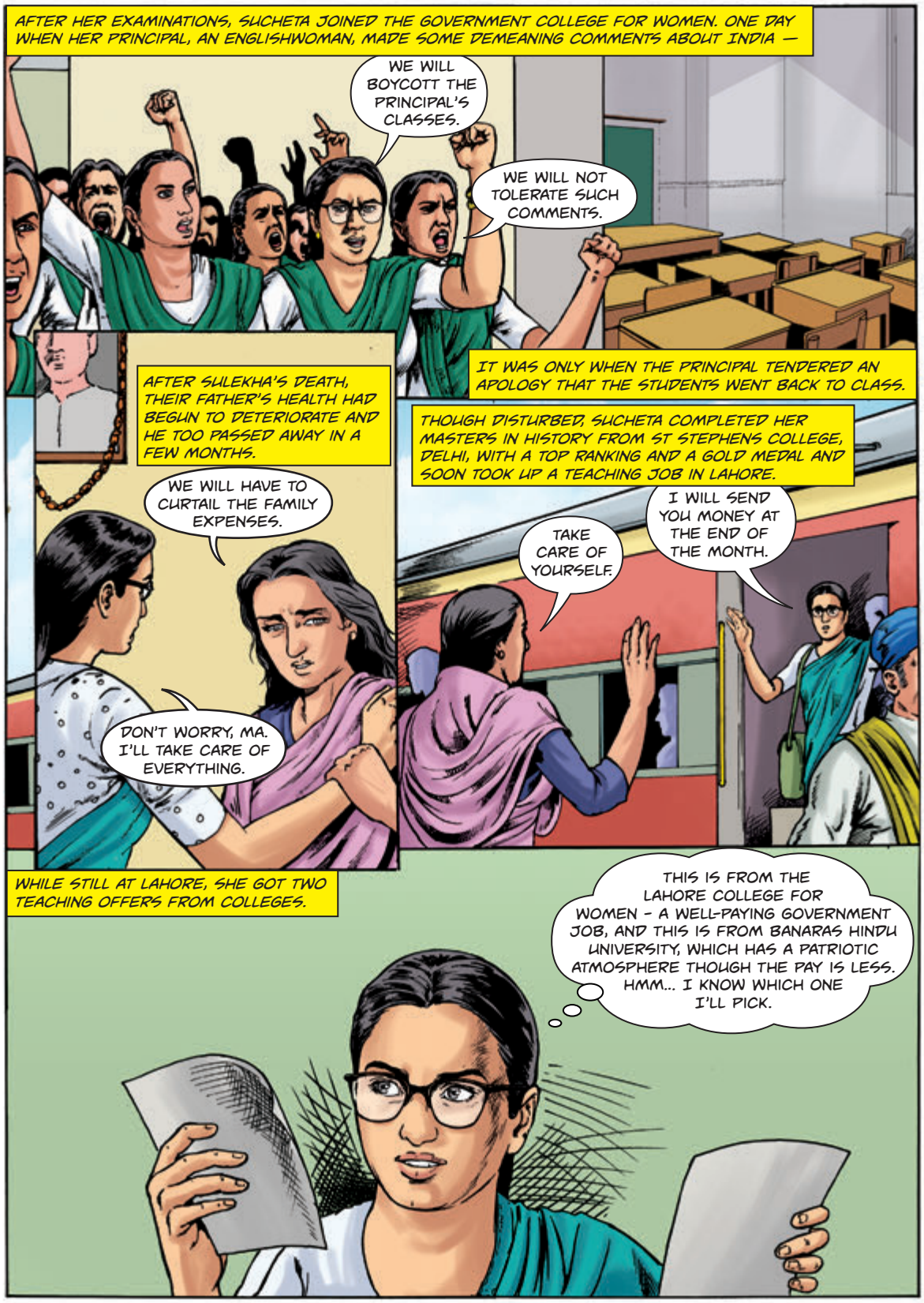
Sucheta Kripalani

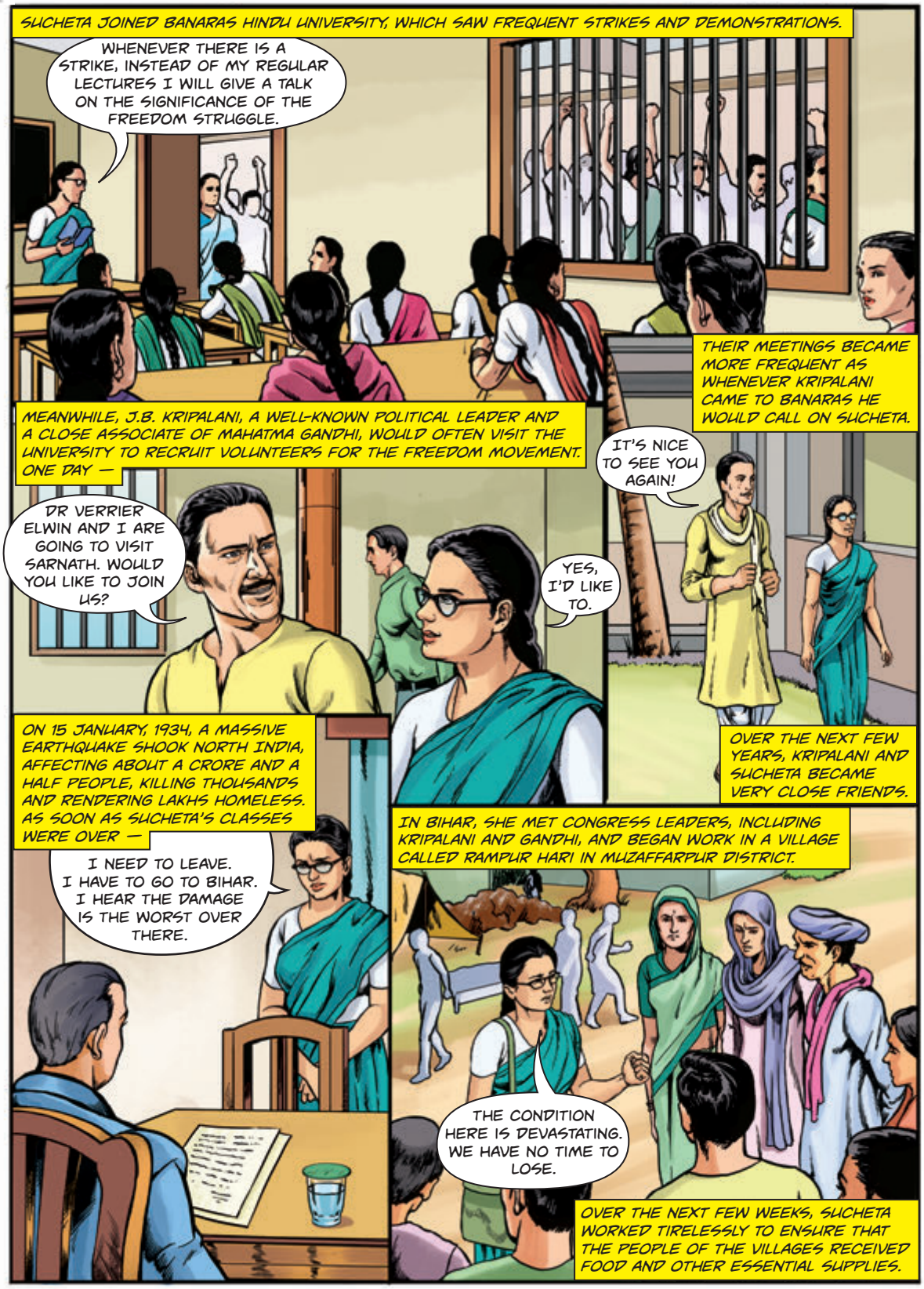


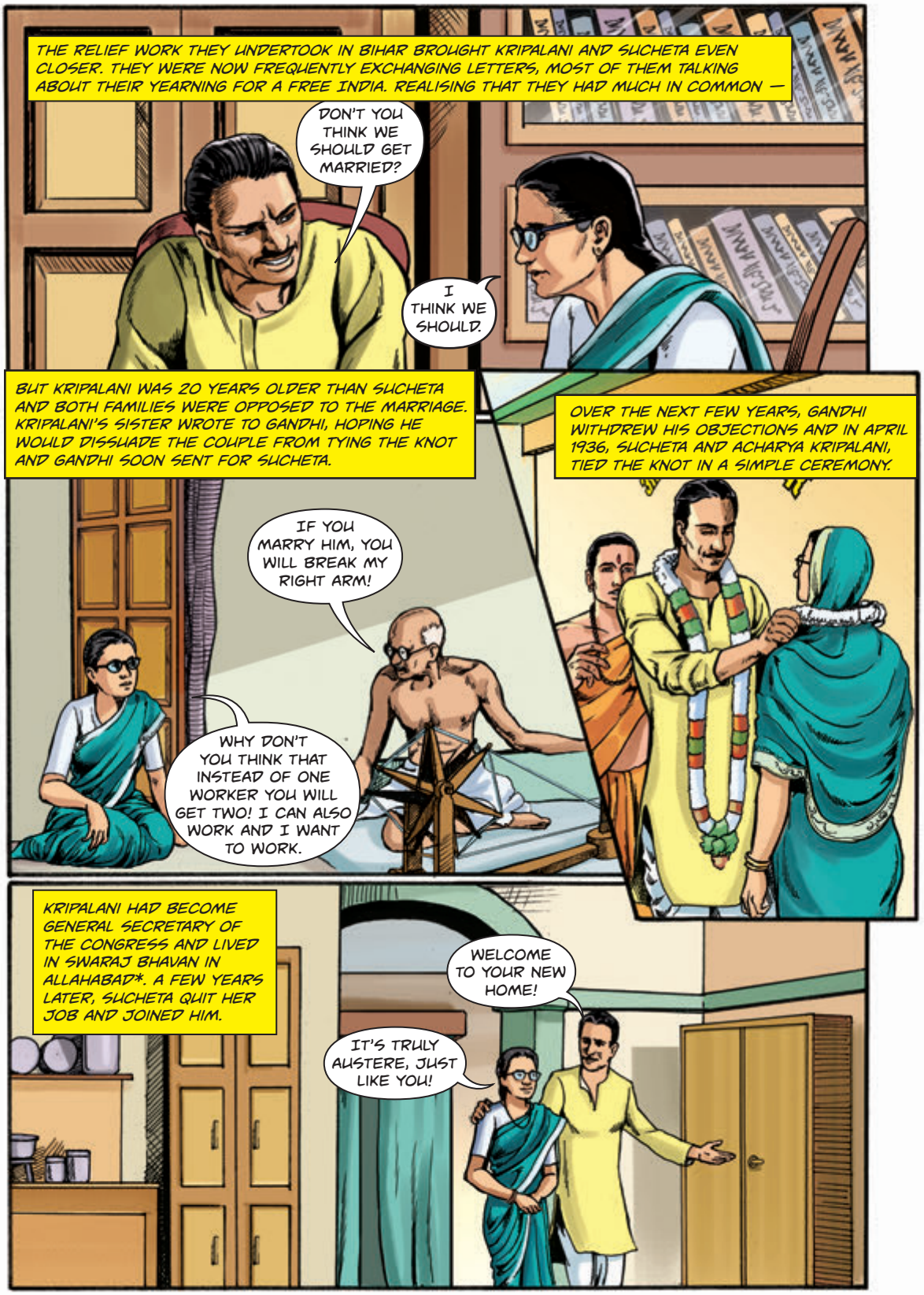
*FOLLOWERS OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ FAITH
^AMBALA IS NOW PART OF HARYANA.

**GENERAL REGINALD DYER ORDERED TROOPS TO FIRE INTO A CROWD OF UNARMED INDIAN CIVILIANS, KILLING OVER 400 PEOPLE AND INJURING 1500.

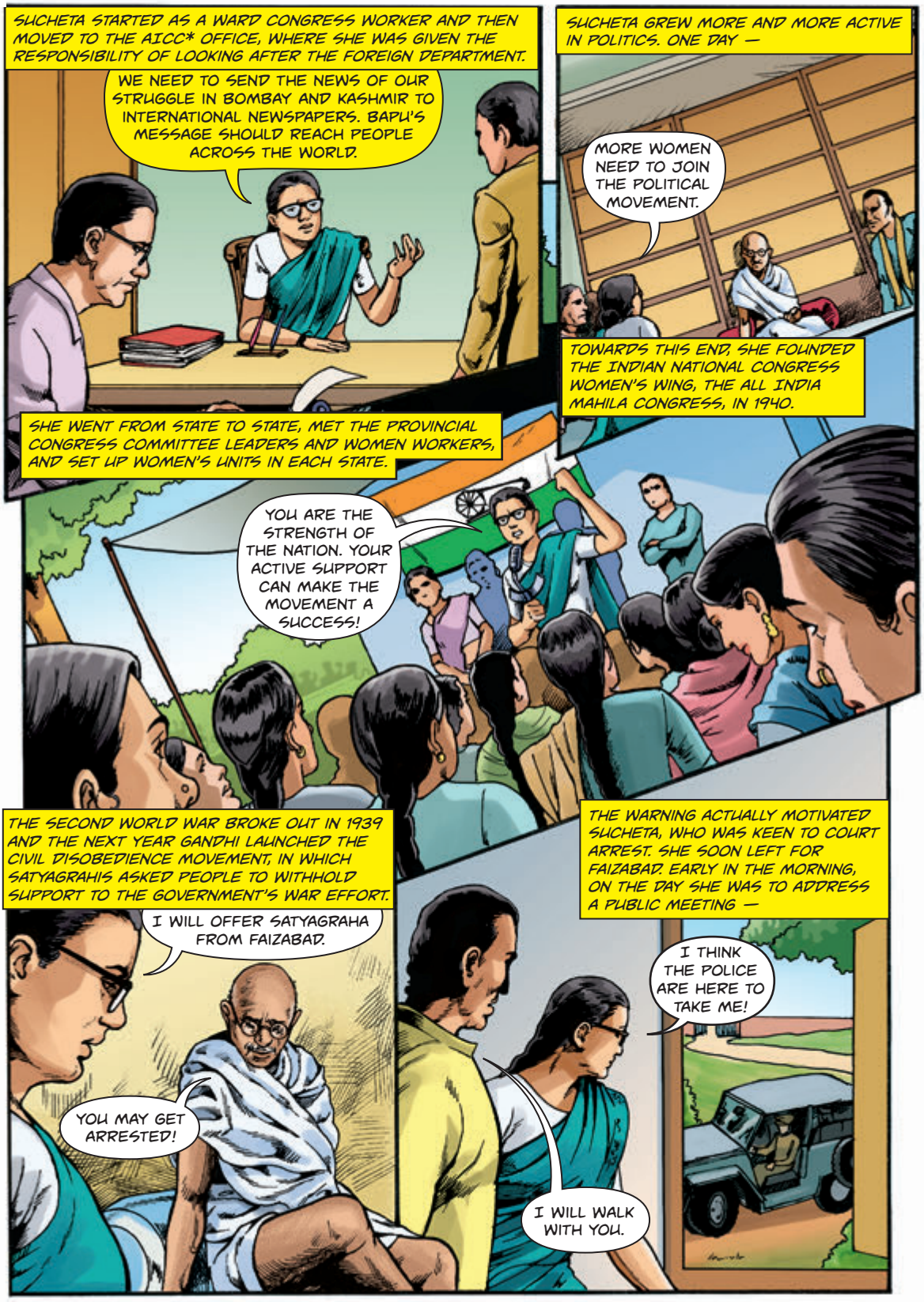
SURENDRANATH'S JOB INVOLVED FREQUENT TRANSFERS, SO SUCHETA OFTEN HAD TO CHANGE SCHOOLS. ON MOVING TO DELHI, SHE JOINED QUEEN MARY'S SCHOOL —
LAST MONTH WE RAISED FUNDS TO HELP THOSE AFFECTED BY THE FLOOD. NOW WILL YOU VOLUNTEER TO SEW CLOTHES FOR OUR LESS PRIVILEGED BROTHERS AND SISTERS?
YES, MA'AM!
OWING TO SULEKHA'S AILING HEALTH, SHE HAD MISSED A YEAR AND NOW SUCHETA AND SULEKHA WERE IN THE SAME CLASS.
ONE DAY —
QUEEN MARY'S SCHOOL DELHI
WE WILL BE GOING TO HONOUR THE PRINCE OF WALES AT KUDSAI GARDEN, NEXT WEEK. MAKE SURE YOU DRESS NEATLY.
THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! WHY SHOULD WE HONOUR A BRITISH PRINCE?
THE DAY OF THE CEREMONY ARRIVED AND RELUCTANTLY SUCHETA AND SULEKHA WENT TO THE VENUE. BUT —
I HAVE A PLAN. SHH...COME WITH ME, LET'S HIDE BEHIND THIS BUSH.
GOOD. WE CAN JOIN THE GIRLS ON THE WAY BACK.
WHILE THE SISTERS DID NOT GET CAUGHT OR REPRIMANDED, THEY FELT A SENSE OF SHAME FOR AGREEING TO GO, WHICH THEY CARRIED IN THEIR HEARTS FOR MANY YEARS.
THE SISTERS COMPLETED THEIR MATRICULATION AND JOINED KINNAIRD COLLEGE IN LAHORE WHEN SULEKHA'S HEALTH WORSENED WITH RHEUMATIC FEVER. FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, SHE WAS IN AND OUT OF HOSPITALS AND SOON SHE BREATHED HER LAST.
SOB! SOB!
SUCHETA WHO WAS IN THE MIDST OF HER EXAMINATIONS, HAD LOST HER CLOSEST FRIEND AND CONFIDANTE.


AFTER HER EXAMINATIONS, SUCHETA JOINED THE GOVERNMENT COLLEGE FOR WOMEN. ONE DAY WHEN HER PRINCIPAL, AN ENGLISHWOMAN, MADE SOME DEMEANING COMMENTS ABOUT INDIA —
WE WILL BOYCOTT THE PRINCIPAL'S CLASSES.
WE WILL NOT TOLERATE SUCH COMMENTS.
IT WAS ONLY WHEN THE PRINCIPAL TENDERED AN APOLOGY THAT THE STUDENTS WENT BACK TO CLASS.
AFTER SULEKHA'S DEATH, THEIR FATHER'S HEALTH HAD BEGUN TO DETERIORATE AND HE TOO PASSED AWAY IN A FEW MONTHS.
WE WILL HAVE TO CURTAIL THE FAMILY EXPENSES.
DON'T WORRY, MA. I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING.
THOUGH DISTURBED, SUCHETA COMPLETED HER MASTERS IN HISTORY FROM ST STEPHENS COLLEGE, DELHI, WITH A TOP RANKING AND A GOLD MEDAL AND SOON TOOK UP A TEACHING JOB IN LAHORE.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
I WILL SEND YOU MONEY AT THE END OF THE MONTH.
WHILE STILL AT LAHORE, SHE GOT TWO TEACHING OFFERS FROM COLLEGES.
THIS IS FROM THE LAHORE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN – A WELL-PAYING GOVERNMENT JOB, AND THIS IS FROM BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY, WHICH HAS A PATRIOTIC ATMOSPHERE THOUGH THE PAY IS LESS. HMM... I KNOW WHICH ONE I'LL PICK.


SUCHETA JOINED BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY, WHICH SAW FREQUENT STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS.
WHENEVER THERE IS A STRIKE, INSTEAD OF MY REGULAR LECTURES I WILL GIVE A TALK ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
MEANWHILE, J.B. KRIPALANI, A WELL-KNOWN POLITICAL LEADER AND A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF MAHATMA GANDHI, WOULD OFTEN VISIT THE UNIVERSITY TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT. ONE DAY —
DR VERRIER ELWIN AND I ARE GOING TO VISIT SARNATH. WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?
YES, I'D LIKE TO.
THEIR MEETINGS BECAME MORE FREQUENT AS WHENEVER KRIPALANI CAME TO BANARAS HE WOULD CALL ON SUCHETA.
IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS, KRIPALANI AND SUCHETA BECAME VERY CLOSE FRIENDS.
ON 15 JANUARY, 1934, A MASSIVE EARTHQUAKE SHOOK NORTH INDIA, AFFECTING ABOUT A CRORE AND A HALF PEOPLE, KILLING THOUSANDS AND RENDERING LAKHS HOMELESS. AS SOON AS SUCHETA'S CLASSES WERE OVER —
I NEED TO LEAVE. I HAVE TO GO TO BIHAR. I HEAR THE DAMAGE IS THE WORST OVER THERE.
IN BIHAR, SHE MET CONGRESS LEADERS, INCLUDING KRIPALANI AND GANDHI, AND BEGAN WORK IN A VILLAGE CALLED RAMPUR HARI IN MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT.
THE CONDITION HERE IS DEVASTATING. WE HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE.
OVER THE NEXT FEW WEEKS, SUCHETA WORKED TIRELESSLY TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGES RECEIVED FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES.

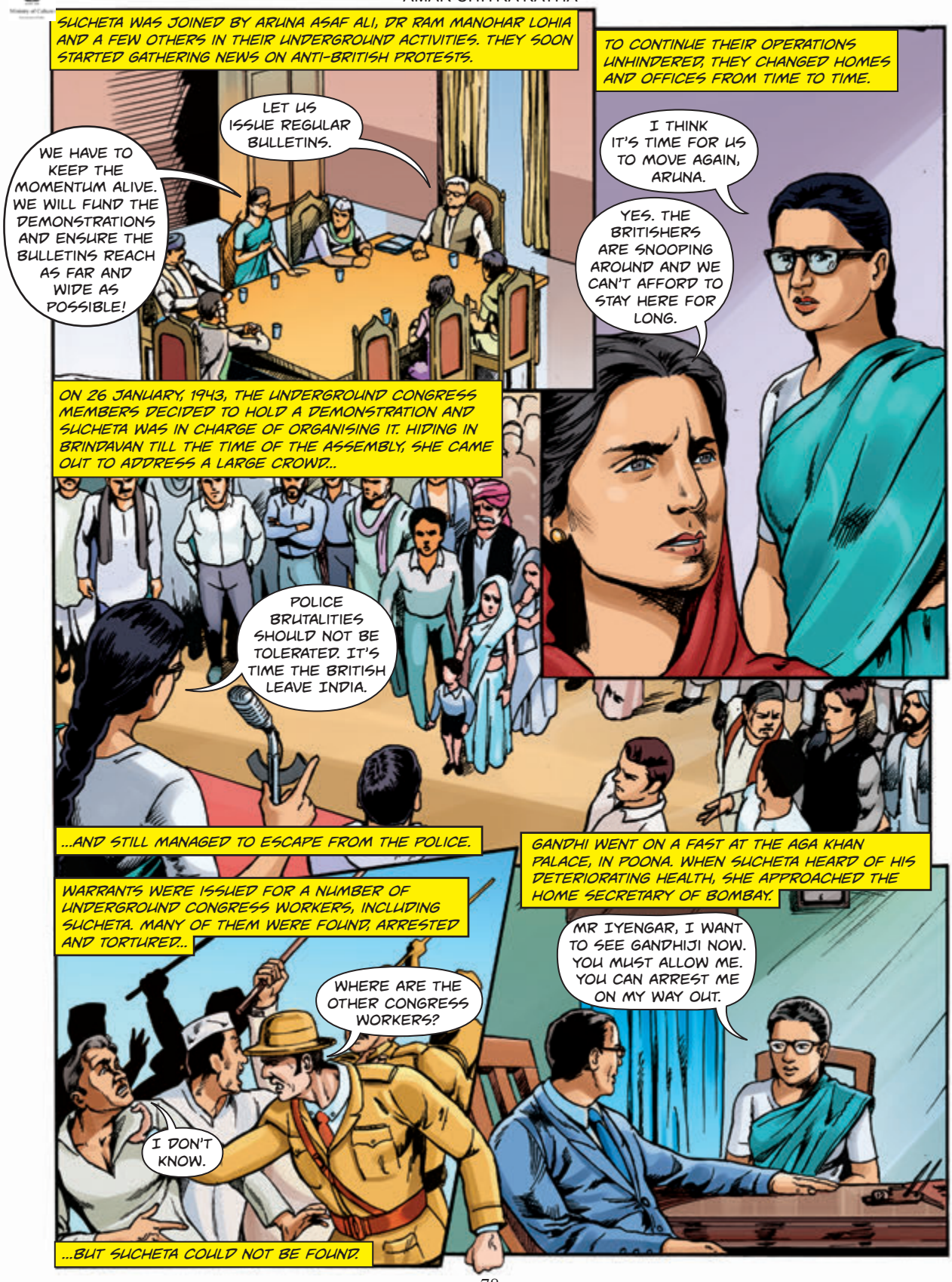


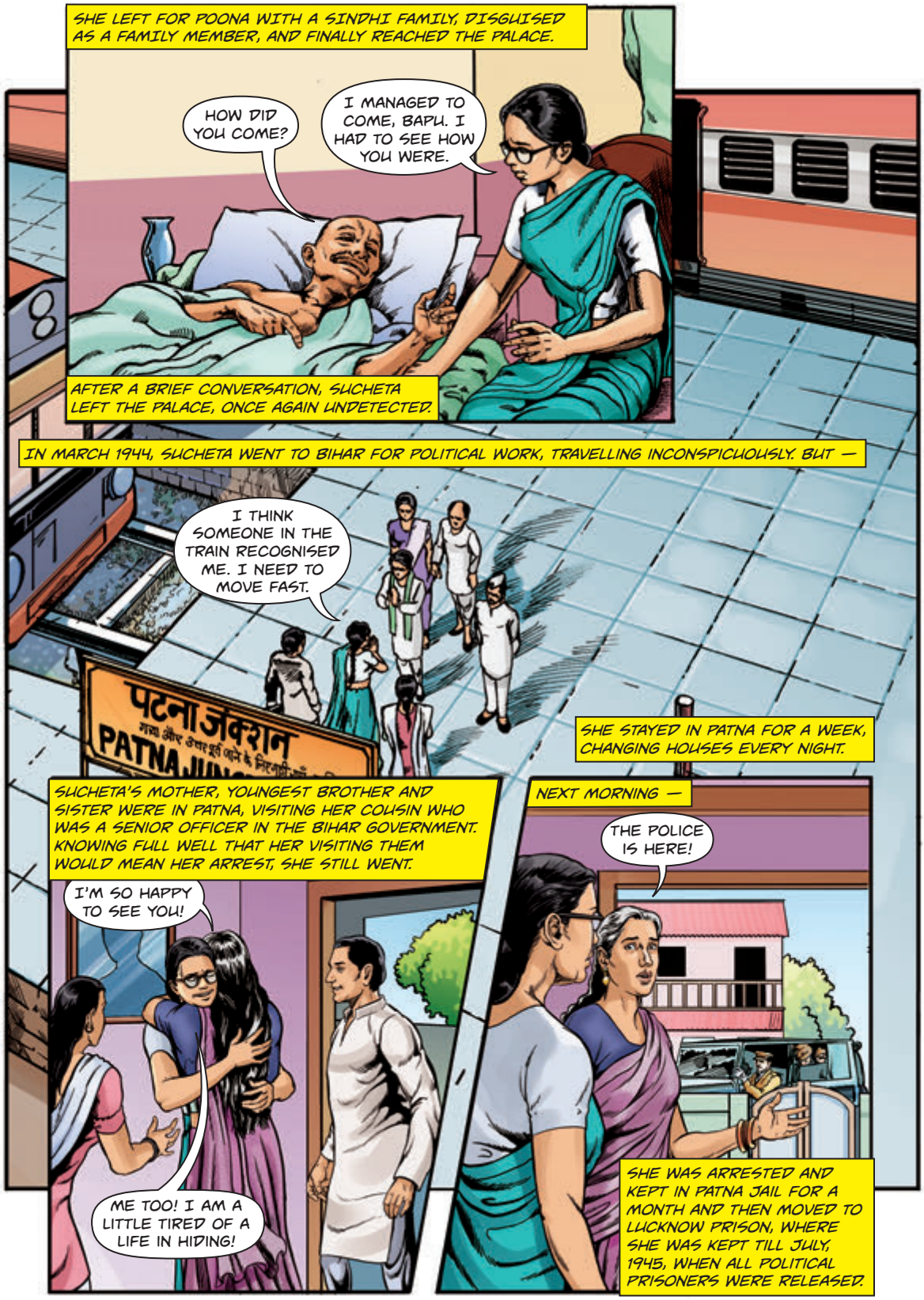
*PRESENT DAY PRAYAGRAJ

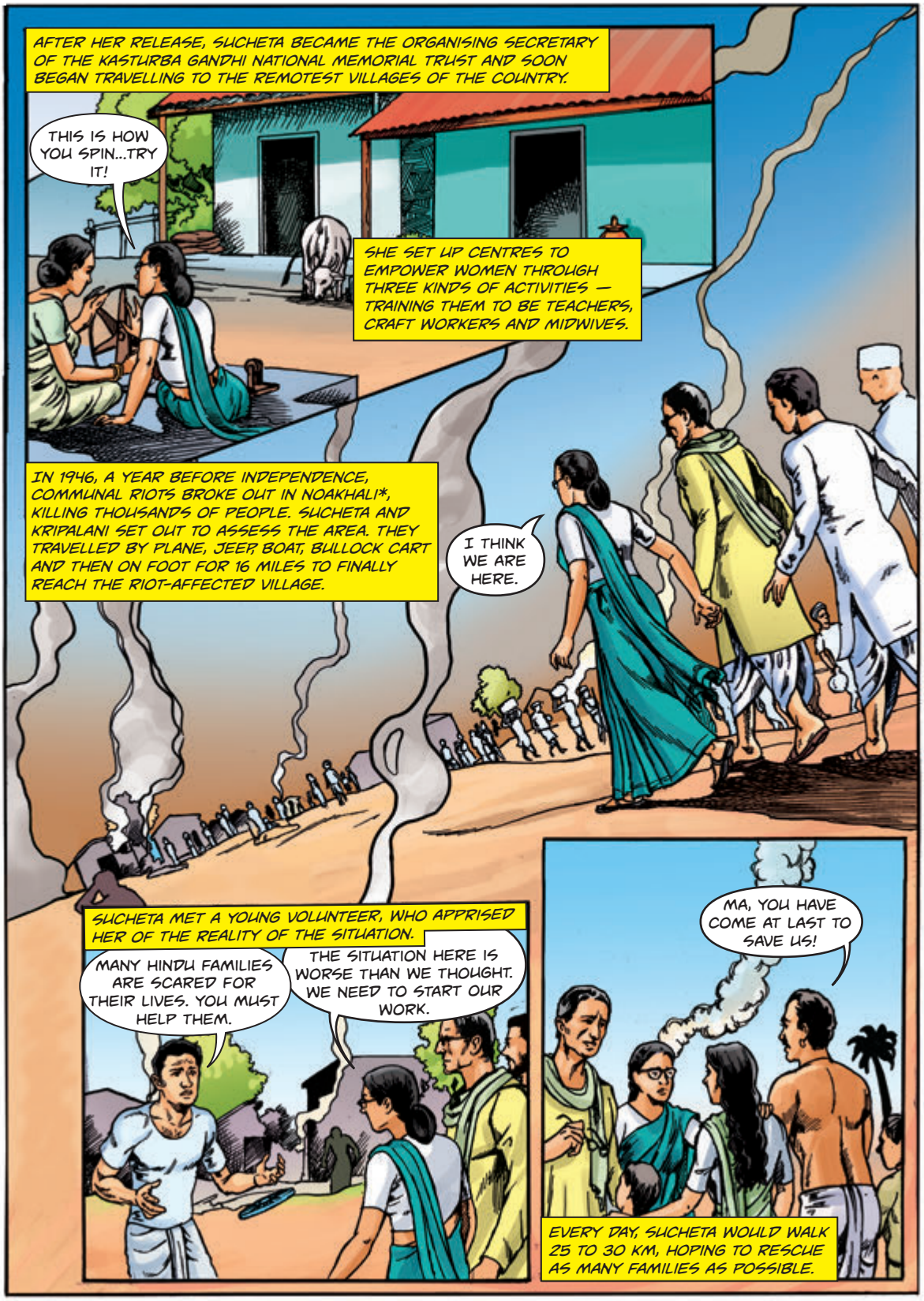


*ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

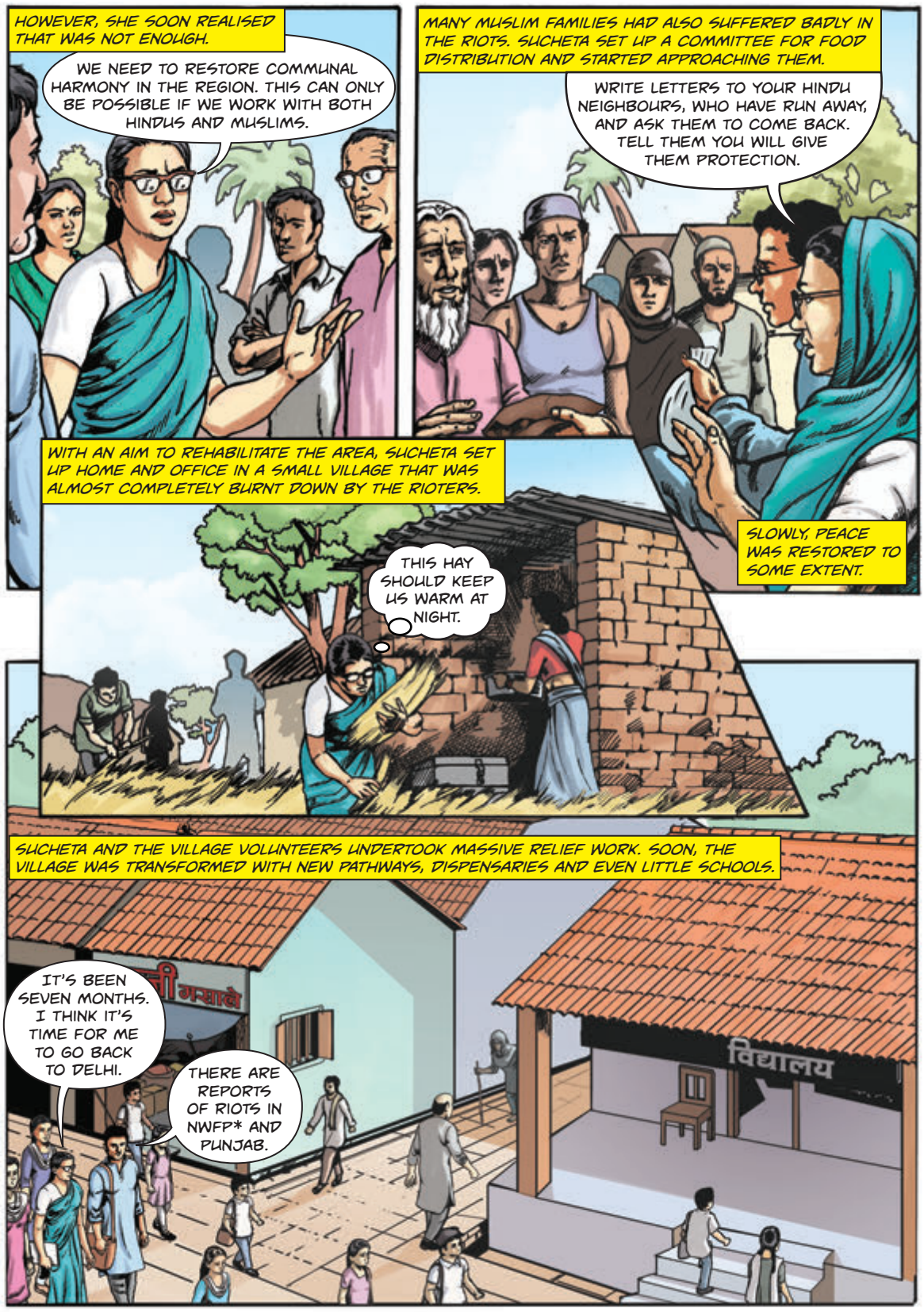
IN THE COURT —
YOU ARE SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT AND A FINE OF RS 200.
SUCHETA WAS TAKEN TO LUCKNOW CENTRAL JAIL WHERE WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE KEPT.
SHE SPENT TIME IN JAIL READING, SEWING, WRITING, AND GARDENING. SHE EVEN TAUGHT THE YOUNG GIRLS WHO HAD BEEN JAILED.
LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT OUR RICH HISTORY!
ON 8 AUGUST, 1942, GANDHI LAUNCHED THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT AND EXHORTED THE LEADERS TO DO OR DIE. THE POLICE GOT WHIFF OF THE PLAN AND THE NEXT MORNING —
CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE IN BOMBAY!
SHE WAS RELEASED FROM JAIL IN JANUARY 1942 AND RESUMED HER POLITICAL WORK.
SINCE MOST PROMINENT CONGRESS LEADERS, INCLUDING GANDHI, WERE ARRESTED AND ANY ATTEMPTS AT HOLDING MEETINGS WERE THWARTED WITH LATHI-CHARGE AND TEAR GAS, A FEW POLITICAL MEMBERS MET IN PRIVATE TO PLAN THEIR NEXT COURSE OF ACTION.
WE NEED TO RUN AN UNDERGROUND OFFICE.


SUCHETA WAS JOINED BY ARUNA ASAF ALI, DR RAM MANOHAR LOHIA AND A FEW OTHERS IN THEIR UNDERGROUND ACTIVITIES. THEY SOON STARTED GATHERING NEWS ON ANTI-BRITISH PROTESTS.
LET US ISSUE REGULAR BULLETINS.
WE HAVE TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM ALIVE. WE WILL FUND THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND ENSURE THE BULLETINS REACH AS FAR AND WIDE AS POSSIBLE!
TO CONTINUE THEIR OPERATIONS UNHINDERED, THEY CHANGED HOMES AND OFFICES FROM TIME TO TIME.
I THINK IT'S TIME FOR US TO MOVE AGAIN, ARUNA.
YES. THE BRITISHERS ARE SNOOPING AROUND AND WE CAN'T AFFORD TO STAY HERE FOR LONG.
ON 26 JANUARY, 1943, THE UNDERGROUND CONGRESS MEMBERS DECIDED TO HOLD A DEMONSTRATION AND SUCHETA WAS IN CHARGE OF ORGANISING IT. HIDING IN BRINDAVAN TILL THE TIME OF THE ASSEMBLY, SHE CAME OUT TO ADDRESS A LARGE CROWD...
POLICE BRUTALITIES SHOULD NOT BE TOLERATED. IT'S TIME THE BRITISH LEAVE INDIA.
...AND STILL MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THE POLICE.
WARRANTS WERE ISSUED FOR A NUMBER OF UNDERGROUND CONGRESS WORKERS, INCLUDING SUCHETA. MANY OF THEM WERE FOUND, ARRESTED AND TORTURED...
WHERE ARE THE OTHER CONGRESS WORKERS?
I DON'T KNOW.
...BUT SUCHETA COULD NOT BE FOUND.
GANDHI WENT ON A FAST AT THE AGA KHAN PALACE, IN POONA. WHEN SUCHETA HEARD OF HIS DETERIORATING HEALTH, SHE APPROACHED THE HOME SECRETARY OF BOMBAY.
MR IYENGAR, I WANT TO SEE GANDHIJI NOW. YOU MUST ALLOW ME. YOU CAN ARREST ME ON MY WAY OUT.

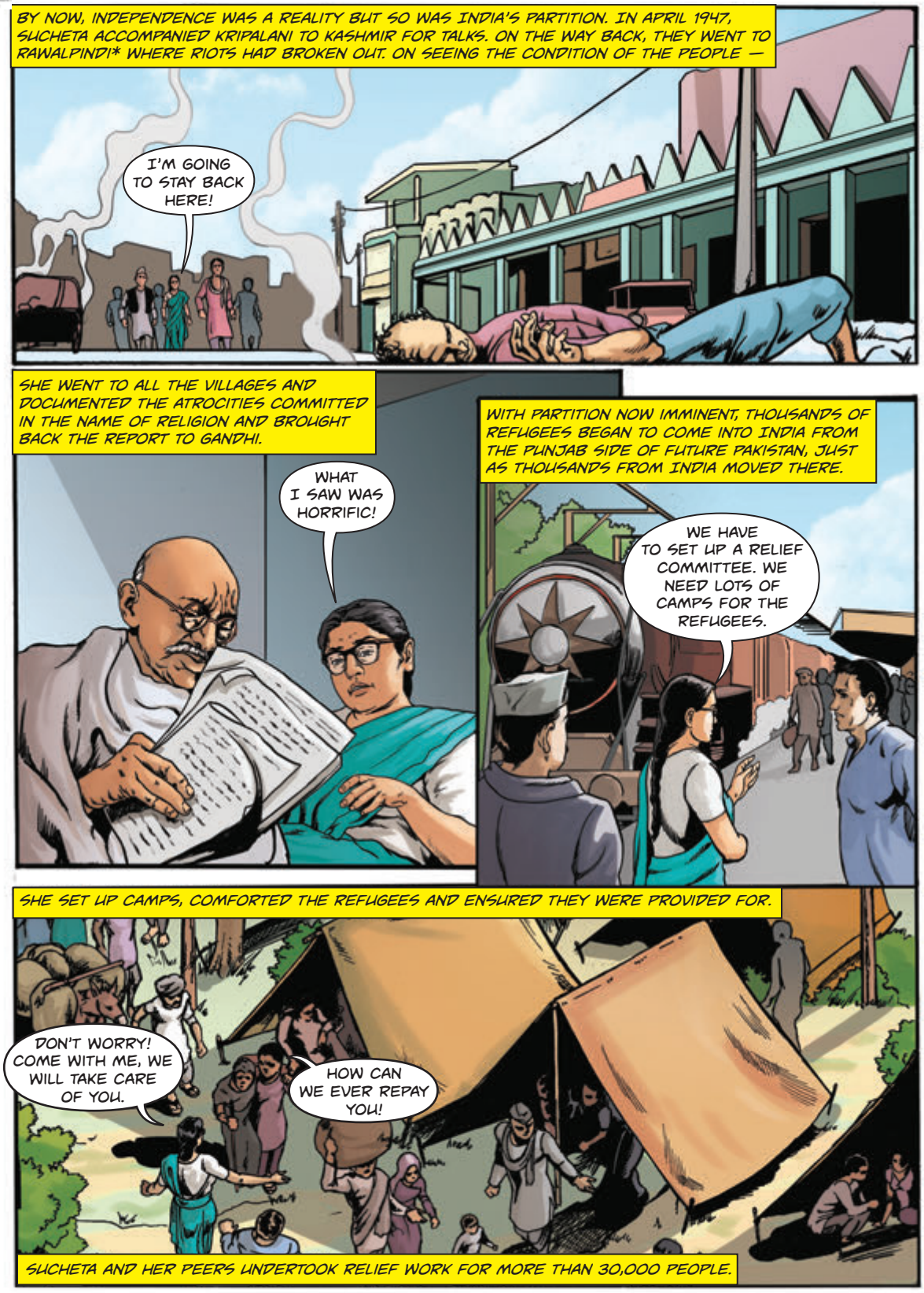

SHE LEFT FOR POONA WITH A SINDHI FAMILY, DISGUISED AS A FAMILY MEMBER, AND FINALLY REACHED THE PALACE.
HOW DID YOU COME?
I MANAGED TO COME, BAPU. I HAD TO SEE HOW YOU WERE.
AFTER A BRIEF CONVERSATION, SUCHETA LEFT THE PALACE, ONCE AGAIN UNDETECTED.
IN MARCH 1944, SUCHETA WENT TO BIHAR FOR POLITICAL WORK, TRAVELLING INCONSPICUOUSLY. BUT —
I THINK SOMEONE IN THE TRAIN RECOGNISED ME. I NEED TO MOVE FAST.
पटना जंक्शन
PATNA
SHE STAYED IN PATNA FOR A WEEK, CHANGING HOUSES EVERY NIGHT.
SUCHETA'S MOTHER, YOUNGEST BROTHER AND SISTER WERE IN PATNA, VISITING HER COUSIN WHO WAS A SENIOR OFFICER IN THE BIHAR GOVERNMENT. KNOWING FULL WELL THAT HER VISITING THEM WOULD MEAN HER ARREST, SHE STILL WENT.
I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!
ME TOO! I AM A LITTLE TIRED OF A LIFE IN HIDING!
NEXT MORNING —
THE POLICE IS HERE!
SHE WAS ARRESTED AND KEPT IN PATNA JAIL FOR A MONTH AND THEN MOVED TO LUCKNOW PRISON, WHERE SHE WAS KEPT TILL JULY, 1945, WHEN ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE RELEASED.



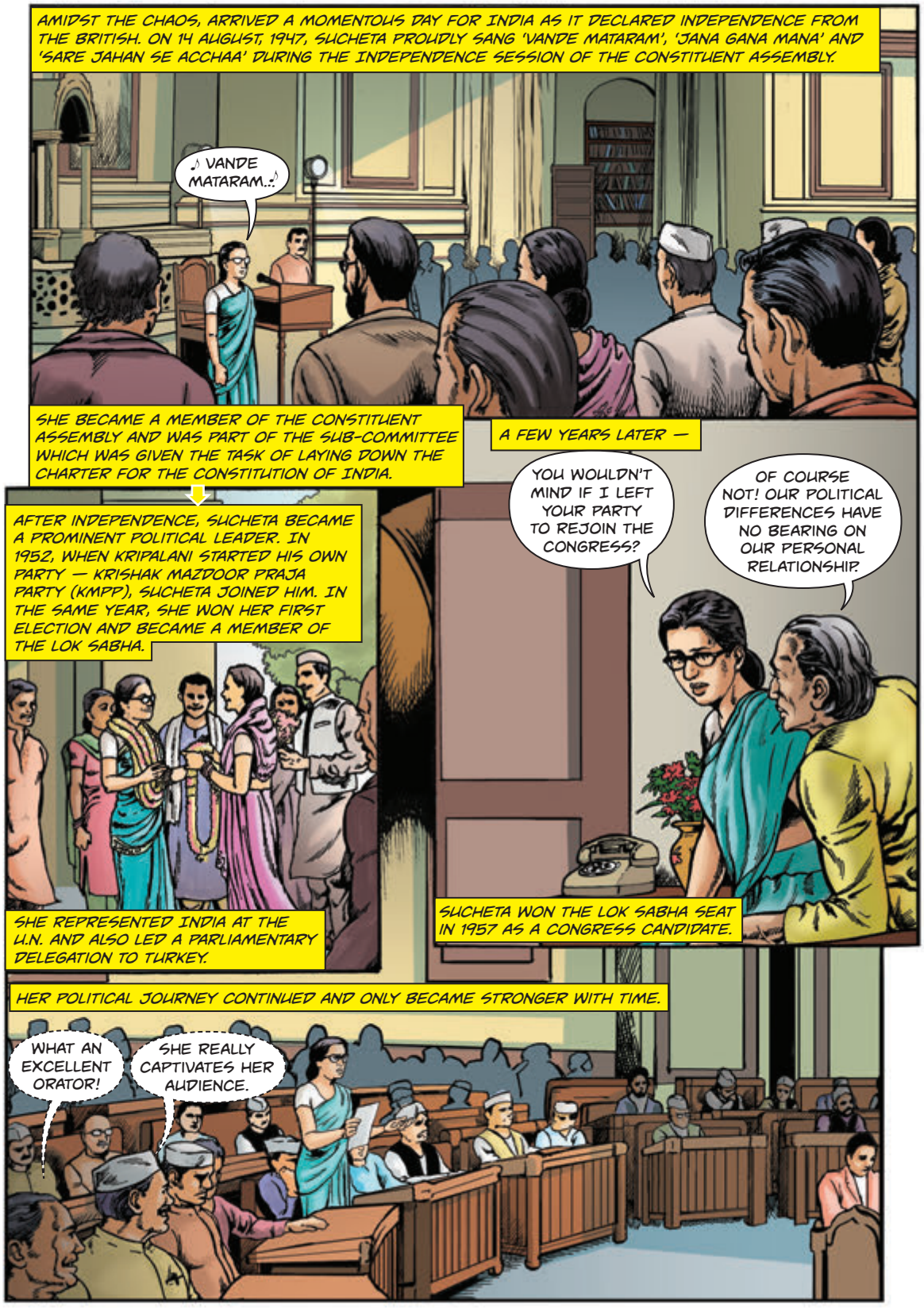
*NOAKHALI IS A REGION IN THE CHITTAGONG DIVISION OF BENGAL, NOW IN BANGLADESH.

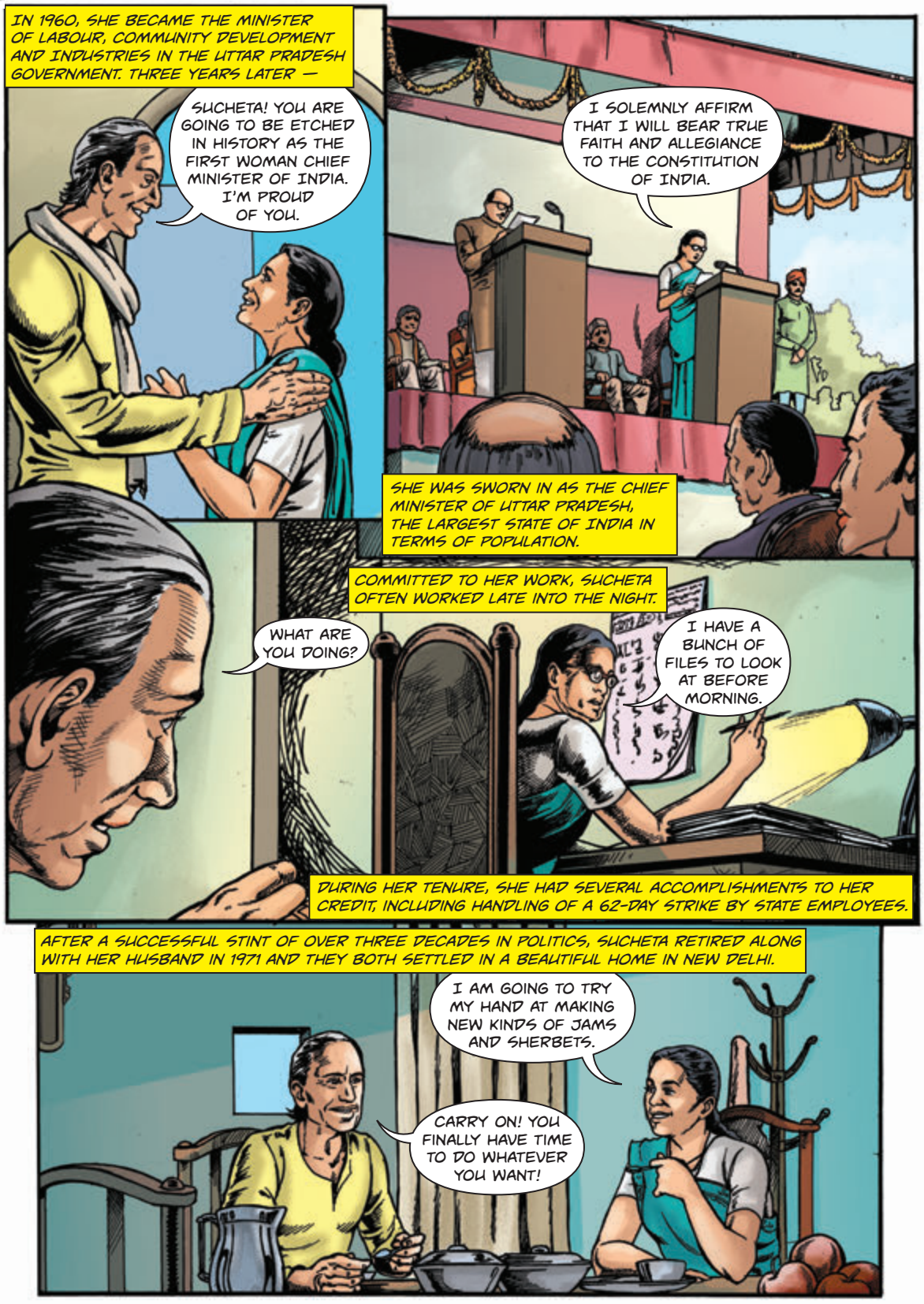


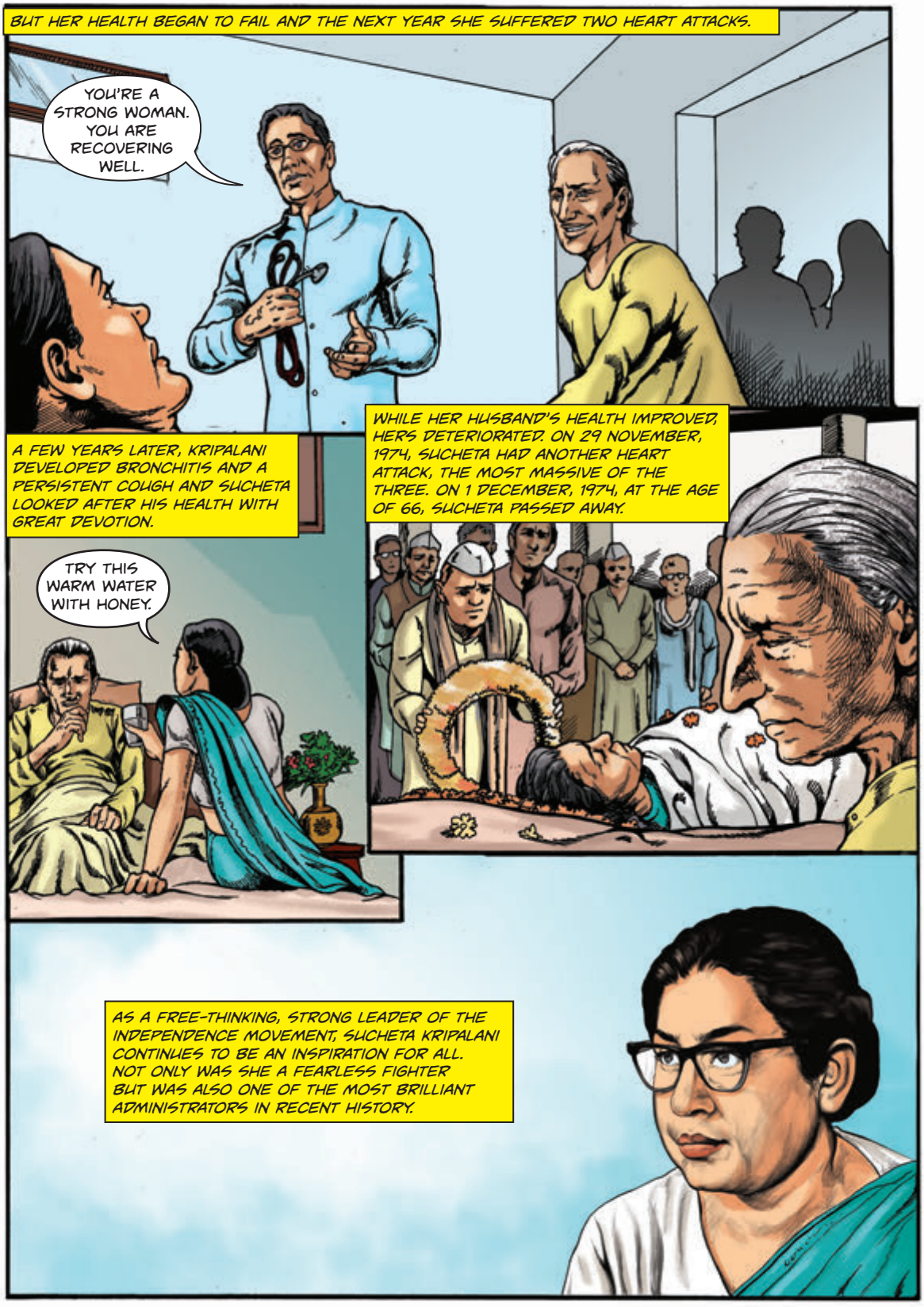
*NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, NOW IN PAKISTAN



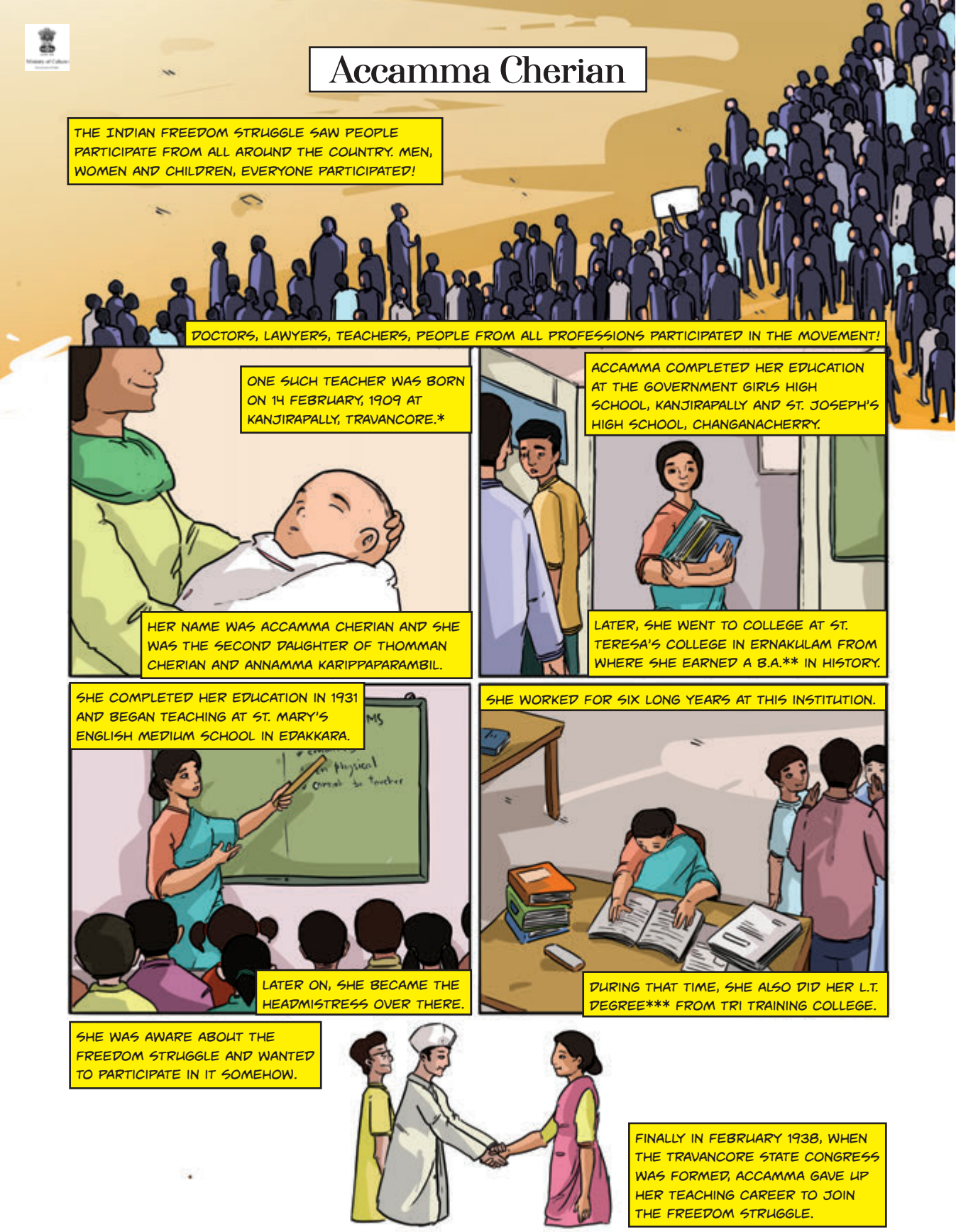
*NOW IN PUNJAB PROVINCE, PAKISTAN


AMIDST THE CHAOS, ARRIVED A MOMENTOUS DAY FOR INDIA AS IT DECLARED INDEPENDENCE FROM THE BRITISH. ON 14 AUGUST, 1947, SUCHETA PROUDLY SANG 'VANDE MATARAM', 'JANA GANA MANA' AND 'SARE JAHAN SE ACCHAA' DURING THE INDEPENDENCE SESSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.
♪ VANDE MATARAM..♪
SHE BECAME A MEMBER OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY AND WAS PART OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE WHICH WAS GIVEN THE TASK OF LAYING DOWN THE CHARTER FOR THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.
AFTER INDEPENDENCE, SUCHETA BECAME A PROMINENT POLITICAL LEADER. IN 1952, WHEN KRIPALANI STARTED HIS OWN PARTY — KRISHAK MAZDOOR PRAJA PARTY (KMPP), SUCHETA JOINED HIM. IN THE SAME YEAR, SHE WON HER FIRST ELECTION AND BECAME A MEMBER OF THE LOK SABHA.
SHE REPRESENTED INDIA AT THE U.N. AND ALSO LED A PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO TURKEY.
A FEW YEARS LATER —
YOU WOULDN'T MIND IF I LEFT YOUR PARTY TO REJOIN THE CONGRESS?
OF COURSE NOT! OUR POLITICAL DIFFERENCES HAVE NO BEARING ON OUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP.
SUCHETA WON THE LOK SABHA SEAT IN 1957 AS A CONGRESS CANDIDATE.
HER POLITICAL JOURNEY CONTINUED AND ONLY BECAME STRONGER WITH TIME.
WHAT AN EXCELLENT ORATOR!
SHE REALLY CAPTIVATES HER AUDIENCE.


IN 1960, SHE BECAME THE MINISTER OF LABOUR, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND INDUSTRIES IN THE UTTAR PRADESH GOVERNMENT. THREE YEARS LATER —
SUCHETA! YOU ARE GOING TO BE ETCHED IN HISTORY AS THE FIRST WOMAN CHIEF MINISTER OF INDIA. I'M PROUD OF YOU.
I SOLEMNLY AFFIRM THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.
SHE WAS SWORN IN AS THE CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTAR PRADESH, THE LARGEST STATE OF INDIA IN TERMS OF POPULATION.
COMMITTED TO HER WORK, SUCHETA OFTEN WORKED LATE INTO THE NIGHT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I HAVE A BUNCH OF FILES TO LOOK AT BEFORE MORNING.
DURING HER TENURE, SHE HAD SEVERAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO HER CREDIT, INCLUDING HANDLING OF A 62-DAY STRIKE BY STATE EMPLOYEES.
AFTER A SUCCESSFUL STINT OF OVER THREE DECADES IN POLITICS, SUCHETA RETIRED ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND IN 1971 AND THEY BOTH SETTLED IN A BEAUTIFUL HOME IN NEW DELHI.
I AM GOING TO TRY MY HAND AT MAKING NEW KINDS OF JAMS AND SHERBETS.
CARRY ON! YOU FINALLY HAVE TIME TO DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!


BUT HER HEALTH BEGAN TO FAIL AND THE NEXT YEAR SHE SUFFERED TWO HEART ATTACKS.
YOU'RE A STRONG WOMAN. YOU ARE RECOVERING WELL.
A FEW YEARS LATER, KRIPALANI DEVELOPED BRONCHITIS AND A PERSISTENT COUGH AND SUCHETA LOOKED AFTER HIS HEALTH WITH GREAT DEVOTION.
TRY THIS WARM WATER WITH HONEY.
WHILE HER HUSBAND'S HEALTH IMPROVED, HERS DETERIORATED. ON 29 NOVEMBER, 1974, SUCHETA HAD ANOTHER HEART ATTACK, THE MOST MASSIVE OF THE THREE. ON 1 DECEMBER, 1974, AT THE AGE OF 66, SUCHETA PASSED AWAY.
AS A FREE-THINKING, STRONG LEADER OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT, SUCHETA KRIPALANI CONTINUES TO BE AN INSPIRATION FOR ALL. NOT ONLY WAS SHE A FEARLESS FIGHTER BUT WAS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT ADMINISTRATORS IN RECENT HISTORY.

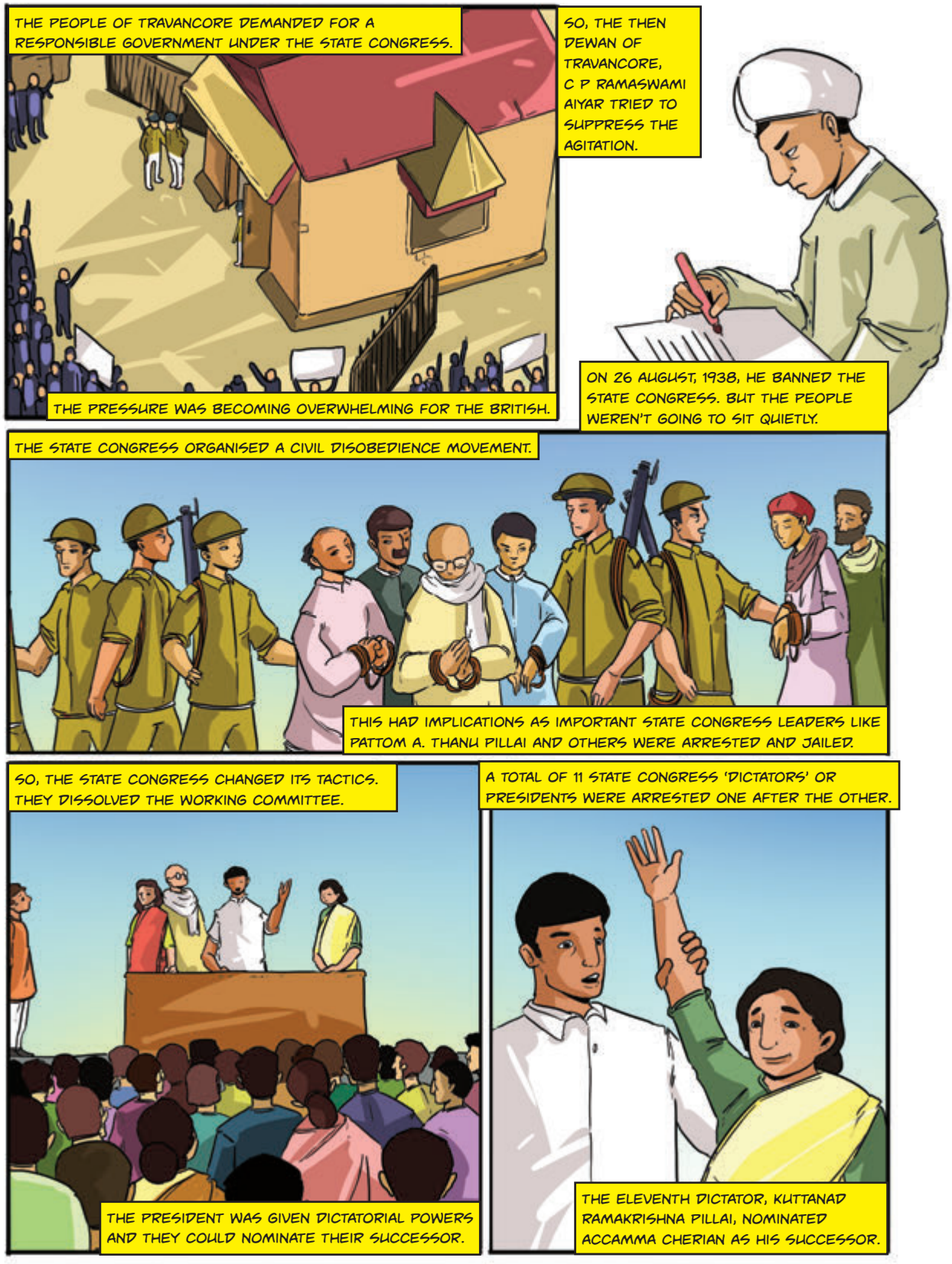
Accamma Cherian



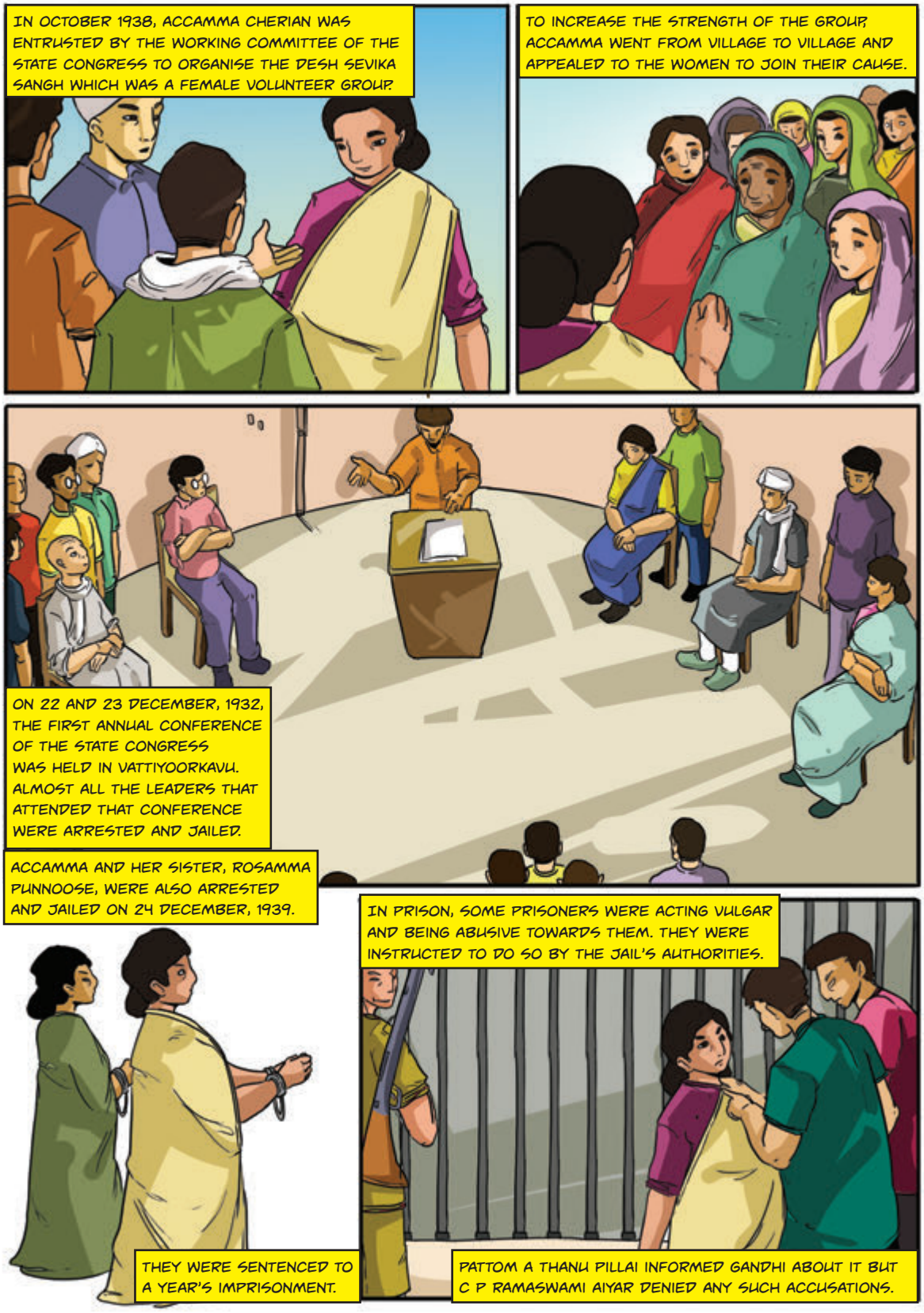
*PRESENT-DAY KERALA

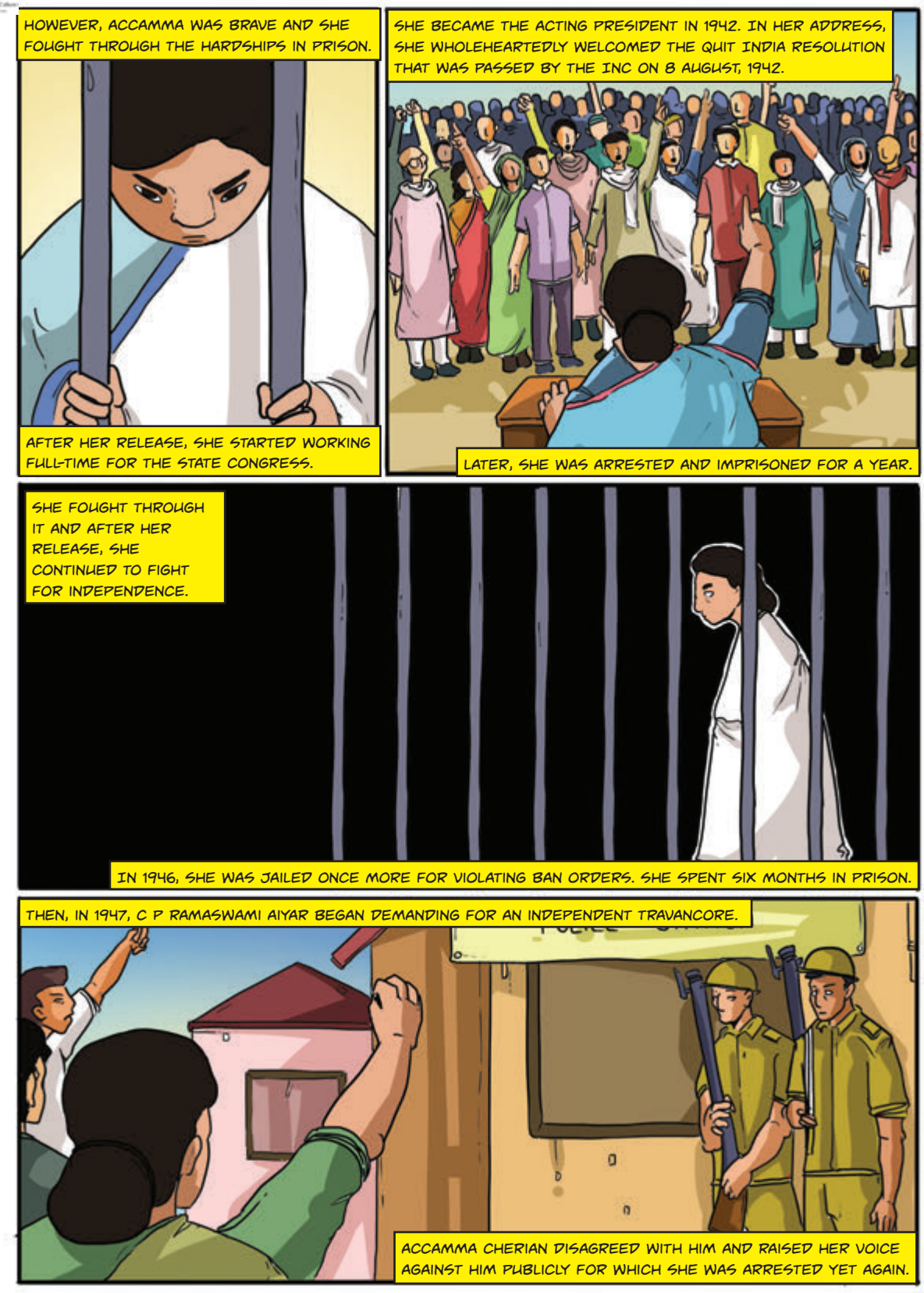
**BACHELOR OF ARTS

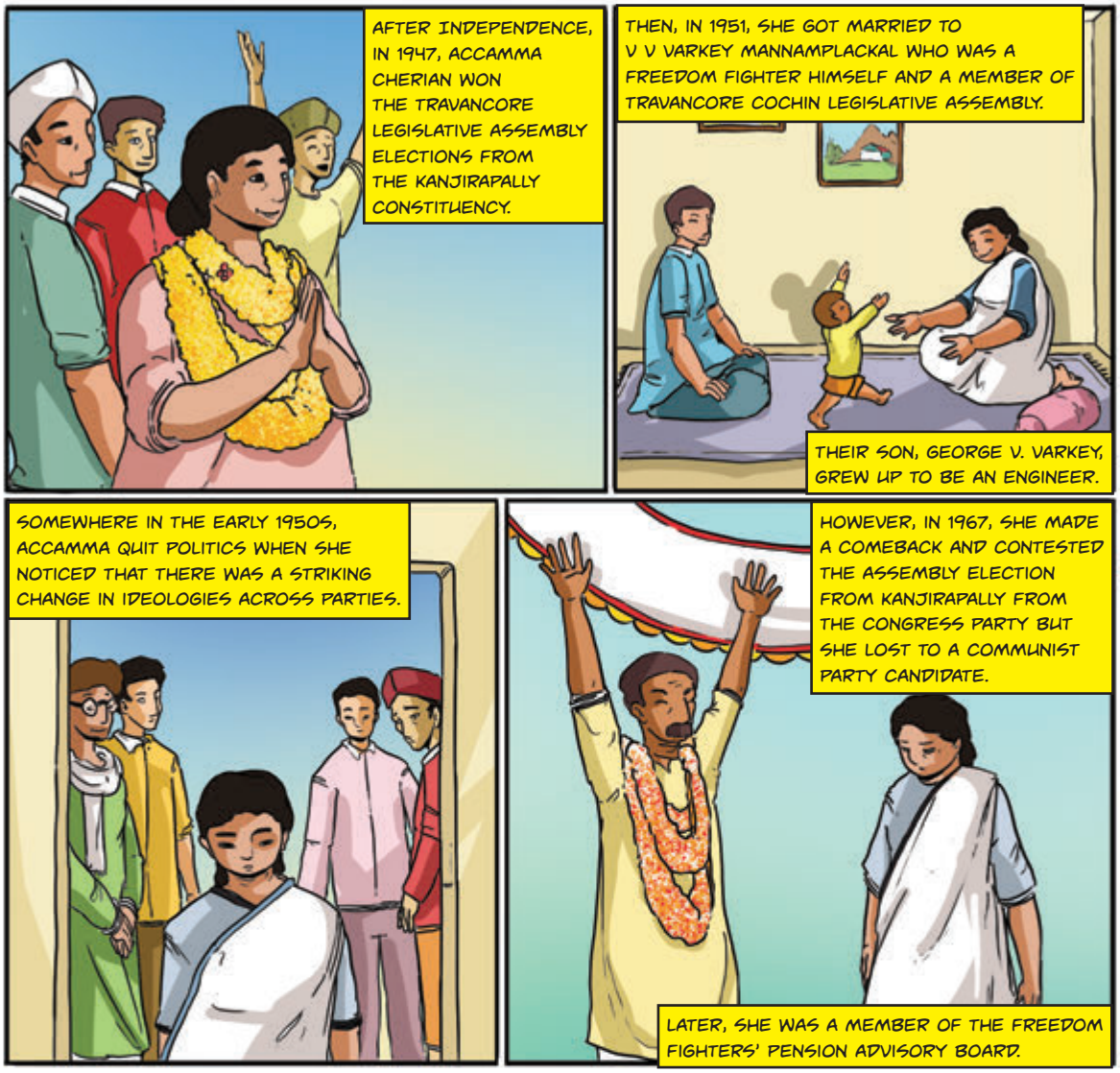
***LICENTIATE IN TEACHING OR A DEGREE TO QUALIFY TO BECOME A TEACHER


THE PEOPLE OF TRAVANCORE DEMANDED FOR A RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT UNDER THE STATE CONGRESS.
THE PRESSURE WAS BECOMING OVERWHELMING FOR THE BRITISH.
SO, THE THEN DEWAN OF TRAVANCORE, C P RAMASWAMI AIYAR TRIED TO SUPPRESS THE AGITATION.
ON 26 AUGUST, 1938, HE BANNED THE STATE CONGRESS. BUT THE PEOPLE WEREN'T GOING TO SIT QUIETLY.
THE STATE CONGRESS ORGANISED A CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT.
THIS HAD IMPLICATIONS AS IMPORTANT STATE CONGRESS LEADERS LIKE PATTOM A. THANU PILLAI AND OTHERS WERE ARRESTED AND JAILED.
SO, THE STATE CONGRESS CHANGED ITS TACTICS. THEY DISSOLVED THE WORKING COMMITTEE.
THE PRESIDENT WAS GIVEN DICTATORIAL POWERS AND THEY COULD NOMINATE THEIR SUCCESSOR.
A TOTAL OF 11 STATE CONGRESS 'DICTATORS' OR PRESIDENTS WERE ARRESTED ONE AFTER THE OTHER.
THE ELEVENTH DICTATOR, KUTTANAD RAMAKRISHNA PILLAI, NOMINATED ACCAMMA CHERIAN AS HIS SUCCESSOR.

WITH HER NEWLY ACQUIRED POWERS, ACCAMMA CHERIAN LED A MASS RALLY TO REVOKE A BAN ON THE STATE CONGRESS.
THE RALLY STARTED FROM THAMPANOOR AND STRETCHED ALL THE WAY TO THE KOWDIAR PALACE OF THE MAHARAJA CHITHIRA THIRUNAL BALARAMA VARMA.
THE PEOPLE DEMANDED FOR THE DISMISSAL OF C P RAMASWAMI AIYAR. BUT THEIR DEMANDS WEREN'T MET WITH KINDNESS.
THE BRITISH POLICE CHIEF ORDERED HIS MEN TO FIRE AT THE RALLY WHICH HAD OVER 20,000 PEOPLE!
ACCAMMA CHERIAN, STOOD IN BETWEEN THE MOB AND THE POLICE WITHOUT AN OUNCE OF FEAR IN HER. SHE SHOWED THE QUALITIES OF A TRUE LEADER.
I AM THEIR LEADER! SHOOT ME FIRST BEFORE YOU KILL OTHERS.
HER EXTREME COURAGE MADE THE POLICE AUTHORITIES BACK OFF. EVENTUALLY, THEY WITHDREW THEIR ORDERS. IT WAS A VICTORY FOR THE PEOPLE!
UPON HEARING THIS, MAHATMA GANDHI GAVE HER THE TITLE OF 'THE JHANSI RANI OF TRAVANCORE'.

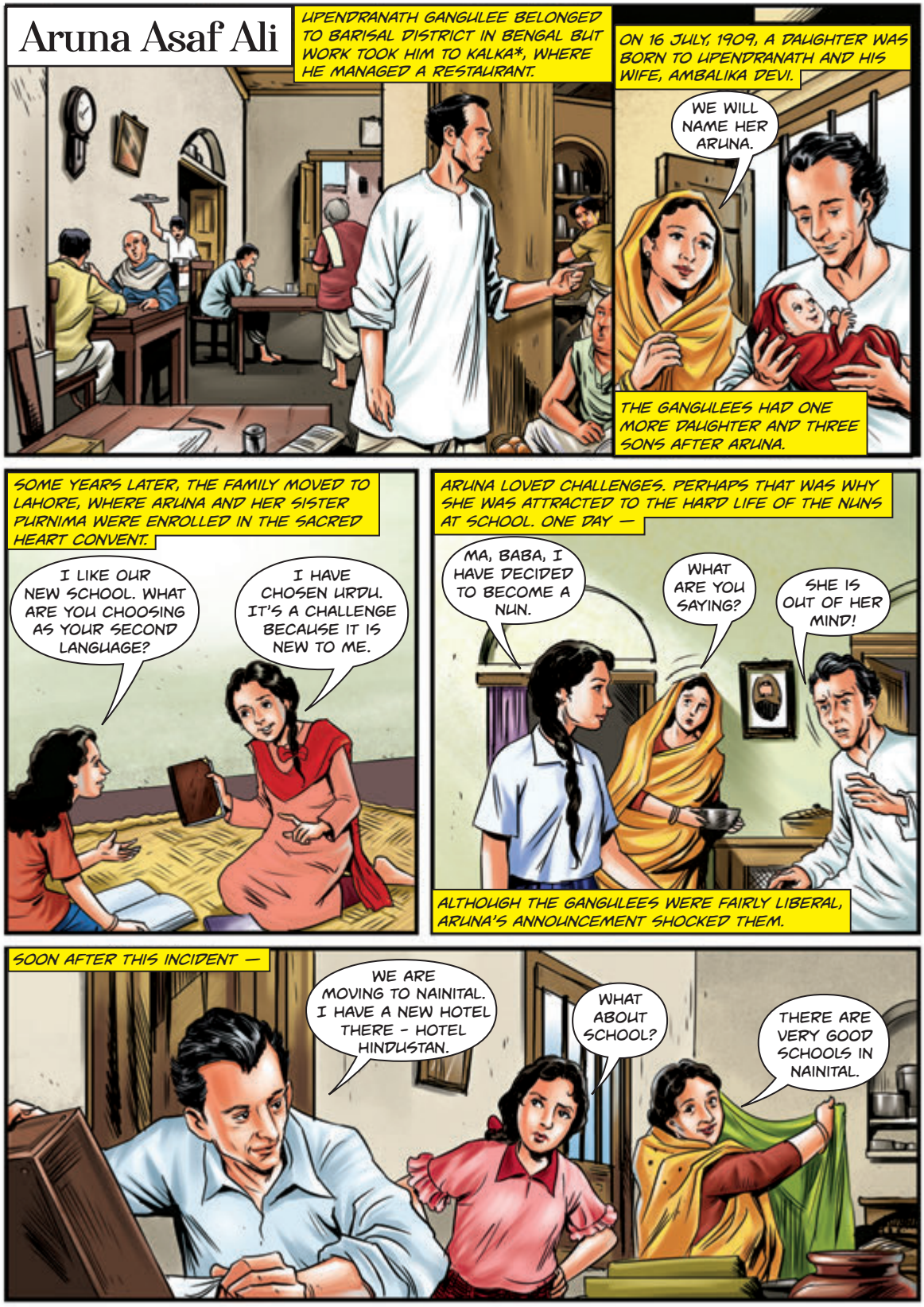

IN OCTOBER 1938, ACCAMMA CHERIAN WAS ENTRUSTED BY THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE STATE CONGRESS TO ORGANISE THE DESH SEVIKA SANGH WHICH WAS A FEMALE VOLUNTEER GROUP.
TO INCREASE THE STRENGTH OF THE GROUP, ACCAMMA WENT FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE AND APPEALED TO THE WOMEN TO JOIN THEIR CAUSE.
ON 22 AND 23 DECEMBER, 1932, THE FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE STATE CONGRESS WAS HELD IN VATTIYOORKAVU. ALMOST ALL THE LEADERS THAT ATTENDED THAT CONFERENCE WERE ARRESTED AND JAILED.
ACCAMMA AND HER SISTER, ROSAMMA PUNNOOSE, WERE ALSO ARRESTED AND JAILED ON 24 DECEMBER, 1939.
THEY WERE SENTENCED TO A YEAR'S IMPRISONMENT.
IN PRISON, SOME PRISONERS WERE ACTING VULGAR AND BEING ABUSIVE TOWARDS THEM. THEY WERE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY THE JAIL'S AUTHORITIES.
PATTOM A THANU PILLAI INFORMED GANDHI ABOUT IT BUT C P RAMASWAMI AIYAR DENIED ANY SUCH ACCUSATIONS.


HOWEVER, ACCAMMA WAS BRAVE AND SHE FOUGHT THROUGH THE HARDSHIPS IN PRISON.
AFTER HER RELEASE, SHE STARTED WORKING FULL-TIME FOR THE STATE CONGRESS.
SHE BECAME THE ACTING PRESIDENT IN 1942. IN HER ADDRESS, SHE WHOLEHEARTEDLY WELCOMED THE QUIT INDIA RESOLUTION THAT WAS PASSED BY THE INC ON 8 AUGUST, 1942.
LATER, SHE WAS ARRESTED AND IMPRISONED FOR A YEAR.
SHE FOUGHT THROUGH IT AND AFTER HER RELEASE, SHE CONTINUED TO FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE.
IN 1946, SHE WAS JAILED ONCE MORE FOR VIOLATING BAN ORDERS. SHE SPENT SIX MONTHS IN PRISON.
THEN, IN 1947, C P RAMASWAMI AIYAR BEGAN DEMANDING FOR AN INDEPENDENT TRAVANCORE.
ACCAMMA CHERIAN DISAGREED WITH HIM AND RAISED HER VOICE AGAINST HIM PUBLICLY FOR WHICH SHE WAS ARRESTED YET AGAIN.

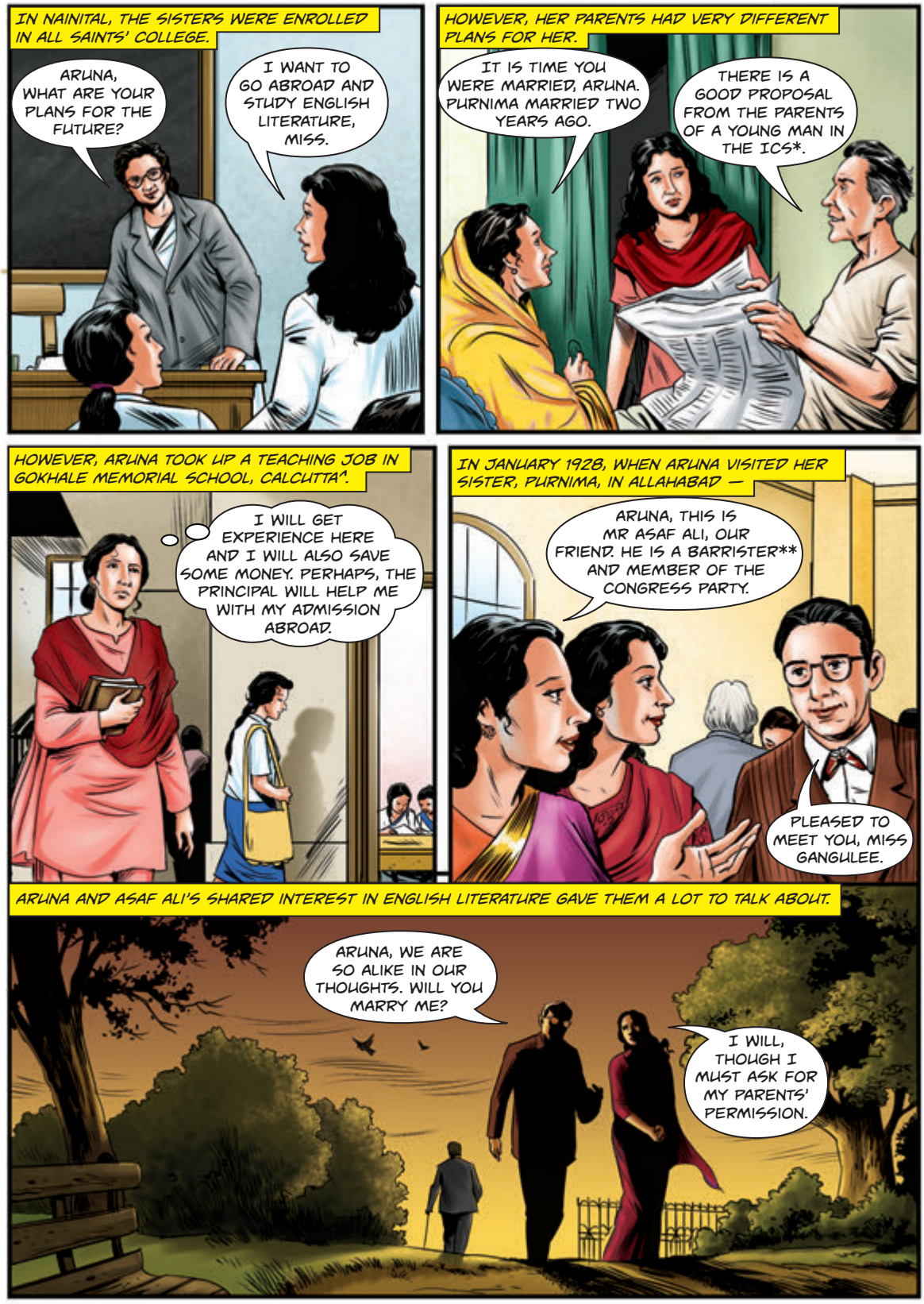


A TEACHER, A FREEDOM FIGHTER AND AN INSPIRATION, ACCAMMA CHERIAN BREATHED HER LAST ON 5 MAY, 1982. HER CONTRIBUTION TO THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE HAS IMMORTALISED HER NAME IN INDIA'S HISTORY.

Aruna Asaf Ali

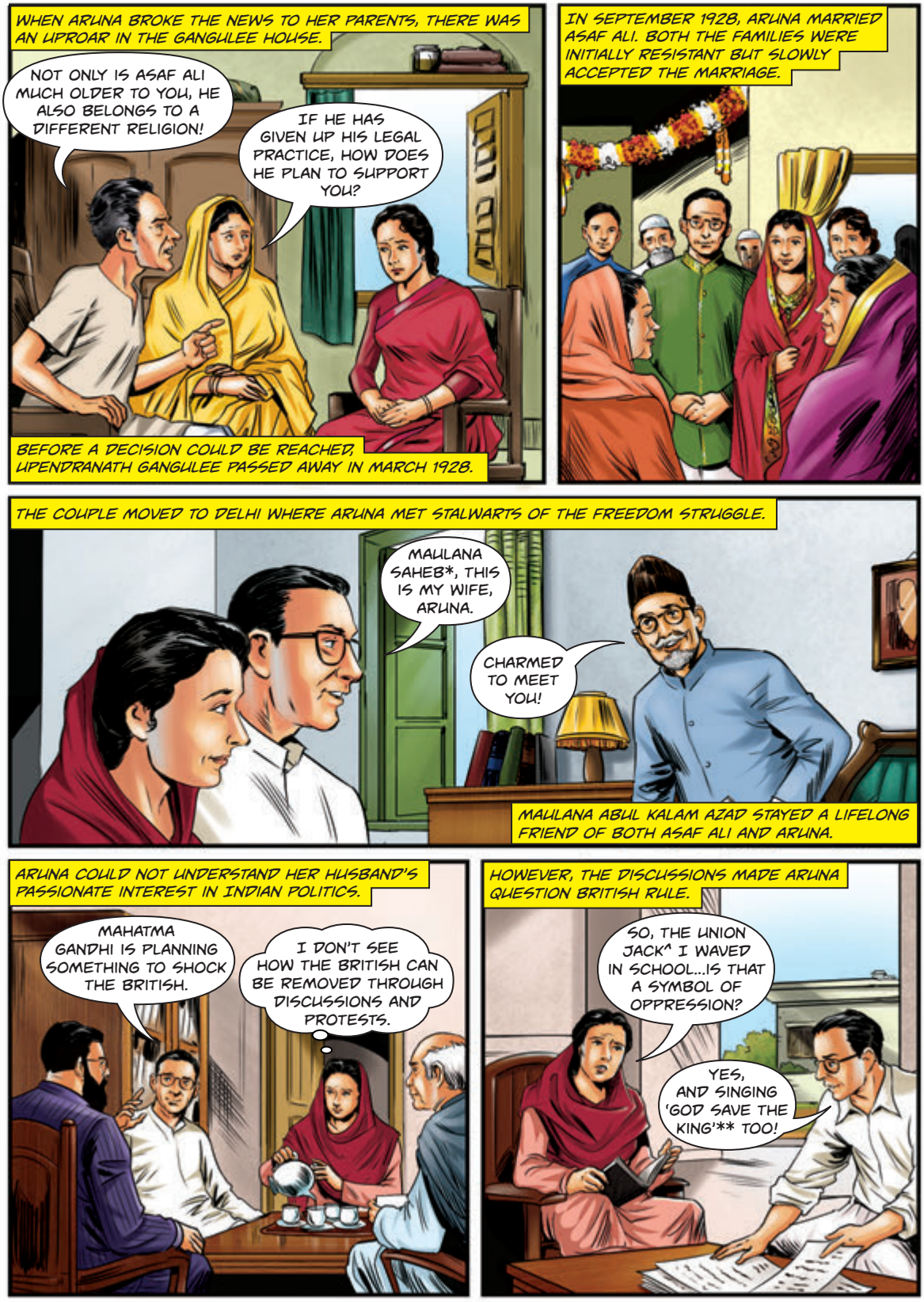


*NOW IN HARYANA



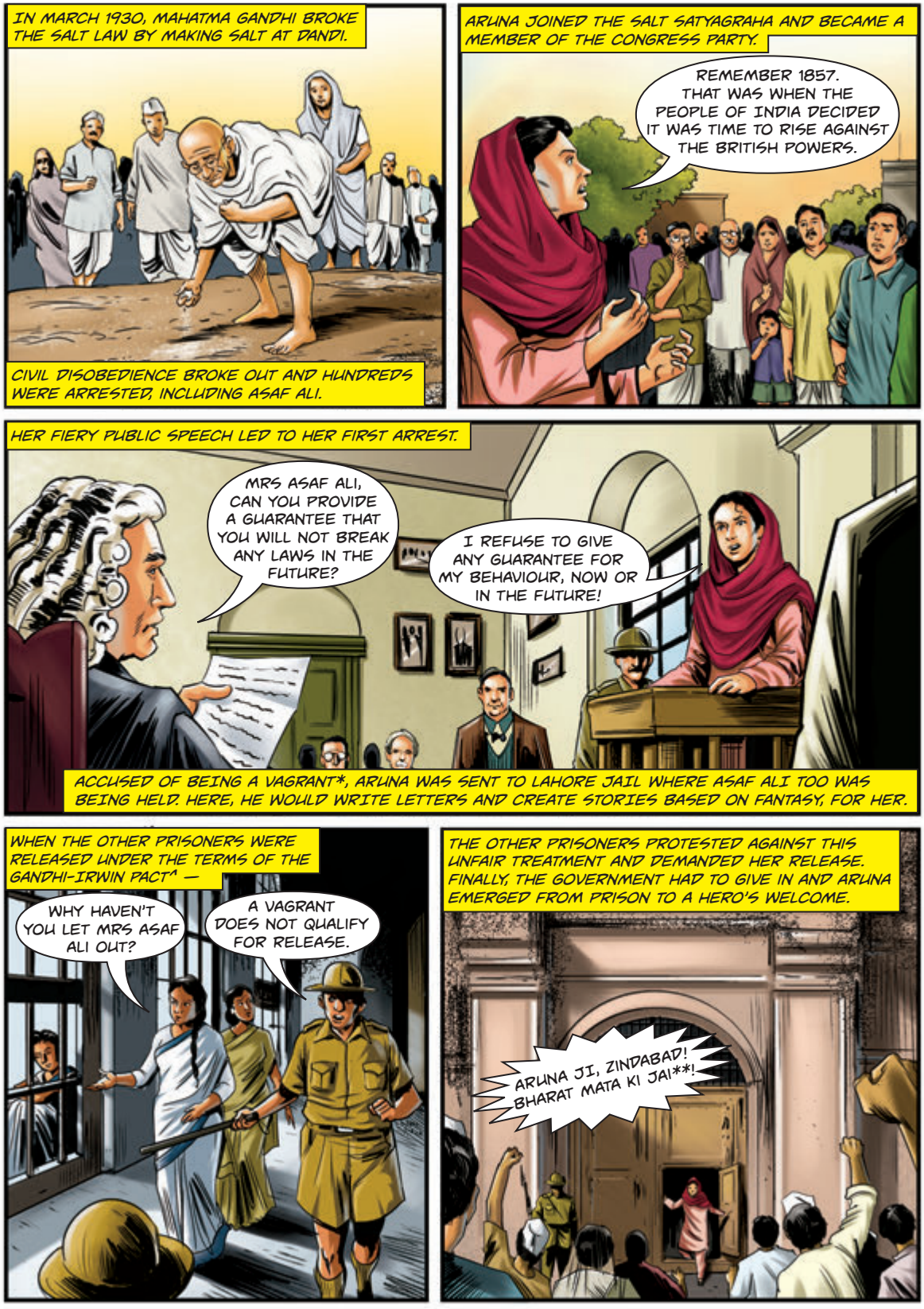
*INDIAN CIVIL SERVICES
^NOW KOLKATA

**HE HAD DEFENDED BATUKESHWAR DUTT AND BHAGAT SINGH IN THE LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE.



*A WELL-KNOWN FREEDOM FIGHTER
^THE BRITISH FLAG

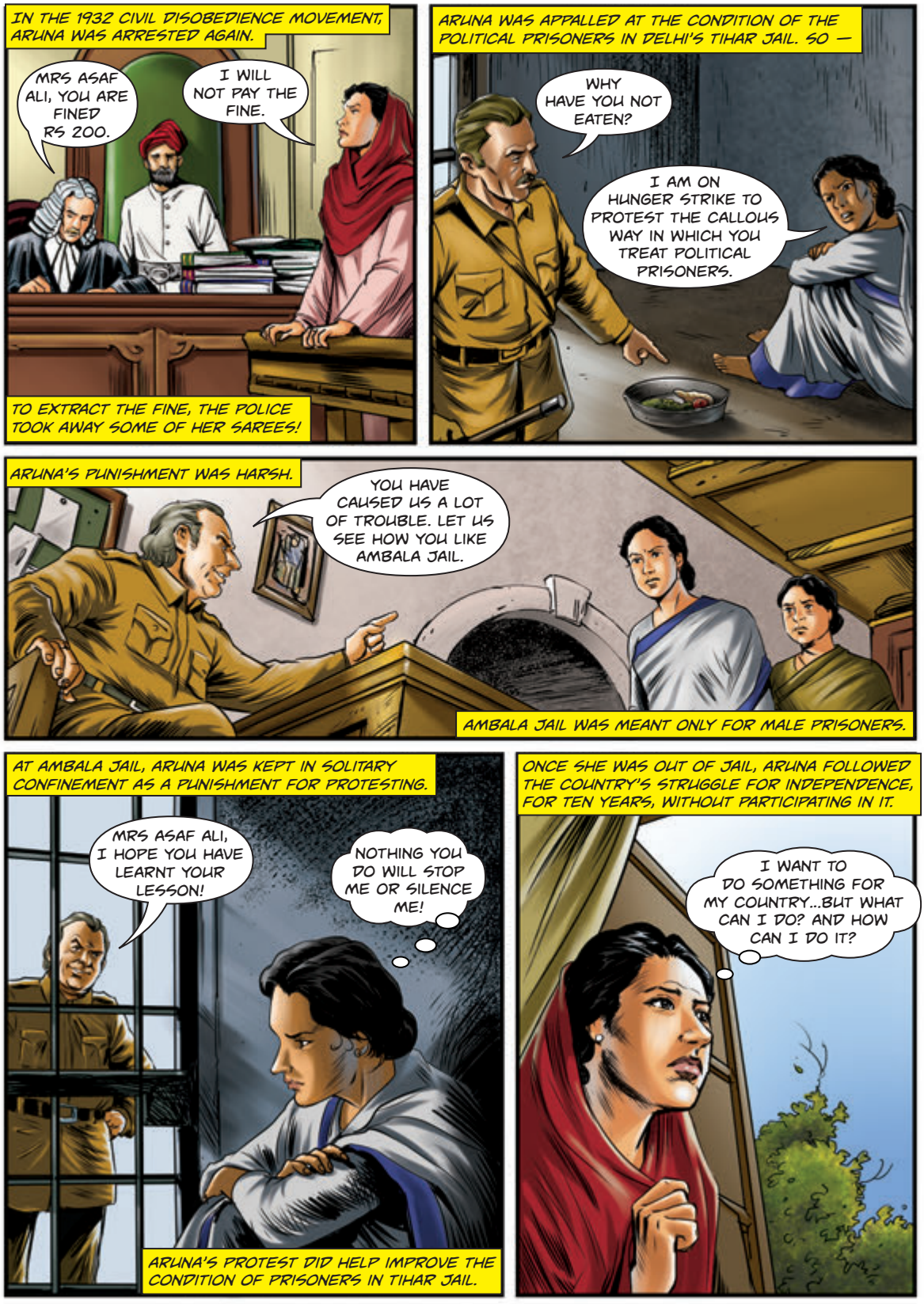
**THE BRITISH NATIONAL ANTHEM

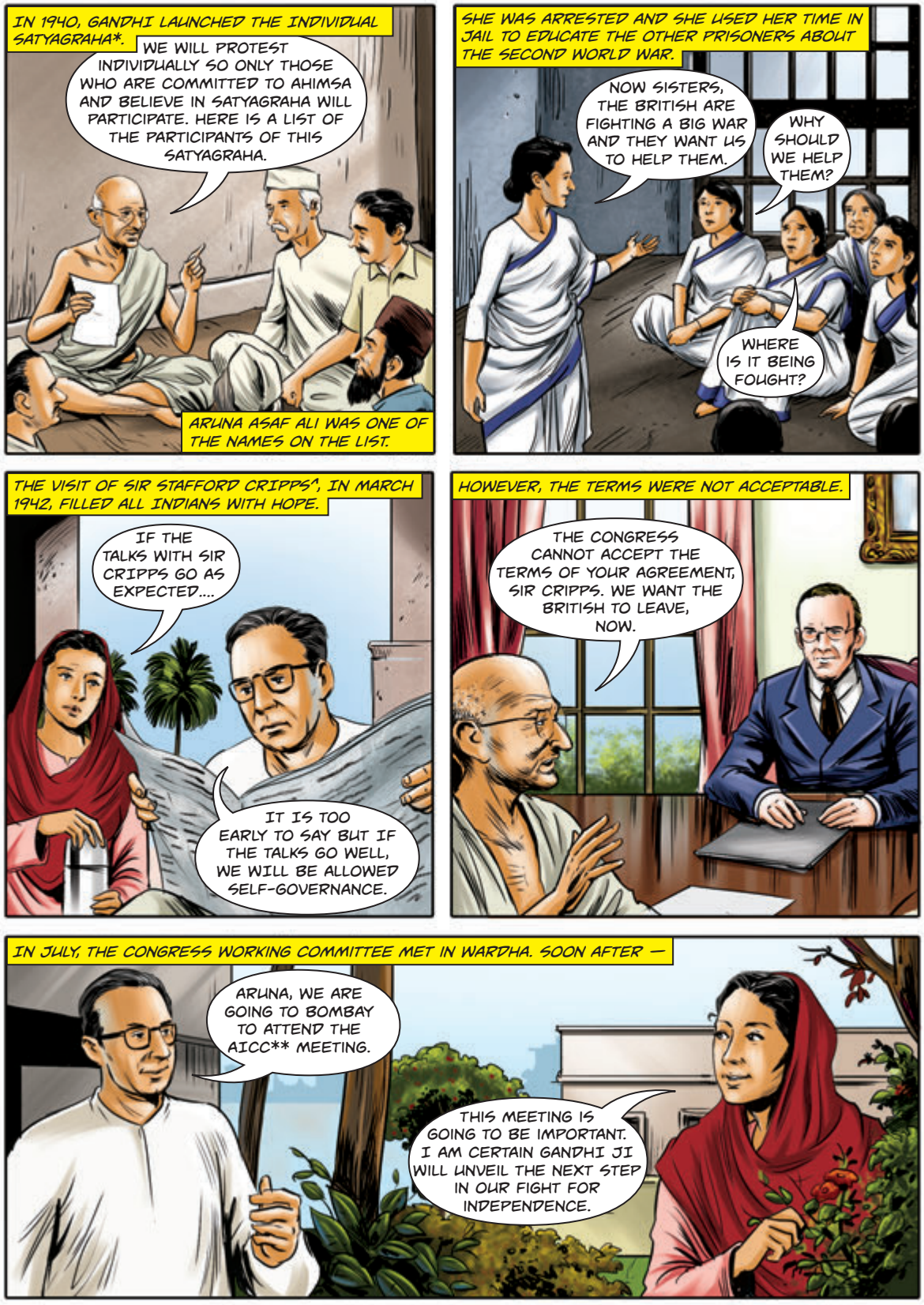


*SOMEONE WHO DOES NOT HAVE A FIXED HOME

^AN AGREEMENT ALLOWING THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

**VICTORY TO MOTHER INDIA


IN THE 1932 CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT, ARUNA WAS ARRESTED AGAIN.
MRS ASAF ALI, YOU ARE FINED RS 200.
I WILL NOT PAY THE FINE.
TO EXTRACT THE FINE, THE POLICE TOOK AWAY SOME OF HER SAREES!
ARUNA WAS APPALLED AT THE CONDITION OF THE POLITICAL PRISONERS IN DELHI'S TIHAR JAIL. SO —
WHY HAVE YOU NOT EATEN?
I AM ON HUNGER STRIKE TO PROTEST THE CALLOUS WAY IN WHICH YOU TREAT POLITICAL PRISONERS.
ARUNA'S PUNISHMENT WAS HARSH.
YOU HAVE CAUSED US A LOT OF TROUBLE. LET US SEE HOW YOU LIKE AMBALA JAIL.
AMBALA JAIL WAS MEANT ONLY FOR MALE PRISONERS.
AT AMBALA JAIL, ARUNA WAS KEPT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AS A PUNISHMENT FOR PROTESTING.
MRS ASAF ALI, I HOPE YOU HAVE LEARNT YOUR LESSON!
NOTHING YOU DO WILL STOP ME OR SILENCE ME!
ARUNA'S PROTEST DID HELP IMPROVE THE CONDITION OF PRISONERS IN TIHAR JAIL.
ONCE SHE WAS OUT OF JAIL, ARUNA FOLLOWED THE COUNTRY'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE, FOR TEN YEARS, WITHOUT PARTICIPATING IN IT.
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING FOR MY COUNTRY...BUT WHAT CAN I DO? AND HOW CAN I DO IT?



*ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE WAS THE FIRST TO BE SELECTED.
**ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

^CRIPPS WANTED SUPPORT FOR BRITAIN IN WORLD WAR I, IN RETURN INDIAN LEADERS WANTED INDEPENDENCE.

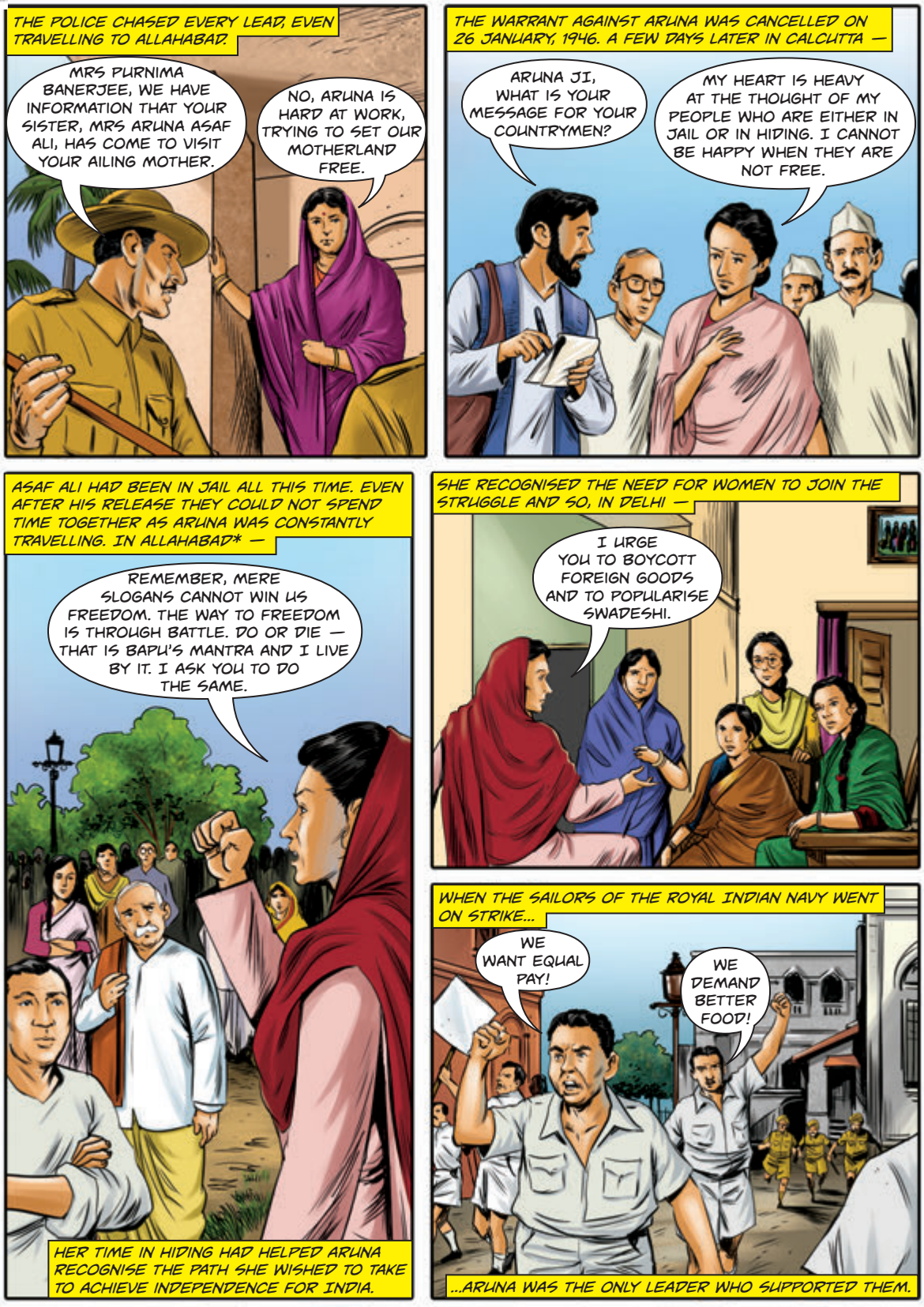
ON 8 AUGUST, 1942, AT THE GOWALIA TANK MAIDAN IN BOMBAY —
OURS IS A PURELY NON-VIOLENT FIGHT FOR OUR INDEPENDENCE. I GIVE YOU A SHORT MANTRA THAT YOU CAN IMPRINT ON YOUR HEART - DO OR DIE. WE SHALL EITHER FREE INDIA OR DIE IN THE ATTEMPT.
MAHATMA GANDHI KI JAI!
INQUILAB ZINDABAD!
THIS WAS THE MESSAGE THAT THE PEOPLE HAD BEEN WAITING FOR AND THEY WELCOMED IT WITH JOY AND EXCITEMENT.
THEY SAY MAHATMA GANDHI WILL SPEAK TO US HERE AGAIN TOMORROW.
WHATEVER HE SAYS WILL HELP US FIGHT THE BRITISH.
THAT NIGHT —
LET US MEET AT 7.30 IN THE MORNING TO HOIST THE FLAG.
MAULANA SAHEB, I HAVE HEARD RUMOURS THAT THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ARREST ALL THE LEADERS TOMORROW.
NO ONE TOOK ARUNA'S WARNING SERIOUSLY.
EARLY NEXT MORNING —
WE ARE HERE TO ARREST MR ASAF ALI!
WHAT ABOUT ME?
THE POLICE DID NOT HAVE A WARRANT FOR ARUNA'S ARREST.

AT BORI BUNDER RAILWAY STATION, A SPECIAL TRAIN STOOD READY TO CARRY THE LEADERS AWAY TO A SECRET DESTINATION.
EVERY WINDOW OF THE TRAIN FRAMES A FACE KNOWN, RESPECTED, AND LOVED BY MILLIONS. I SEE MAHATMA GANDHI, SAROJINI JI, MAULANA SAHEB, SARDAR PATEL... ALL THE BRAVEST, STRONGEST LEADERS OF THE COUNTRY, ARRESTED!
THE LEADERS WERE TAKEN AWAY BEFORE THEY COULD CHALK OUT A PLAN OF ACTION.
WHEN ARUNA REACHED GOWALIA TANK MAIDAN —
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? BRING THE FLAG DOWN! IT WILL NOT BE HOISTED EVER AGAIN.
AT THAT MOMENT ARUNA KNEW WHAT SHE HAD TO DO.
WITH CALM CERTAINTY, SHE STEPPED FORWARD AND HOISTED THE FLAG SWIFTLY.
A ROAR WENT UP —
INQUILAB ZINDABAD! BHARAT MATA KI JAI! MAHATMA GANDHI ZINDABAD!
BREAK UP THE CROWD! USE YOUR LATHIS AND GUNS!

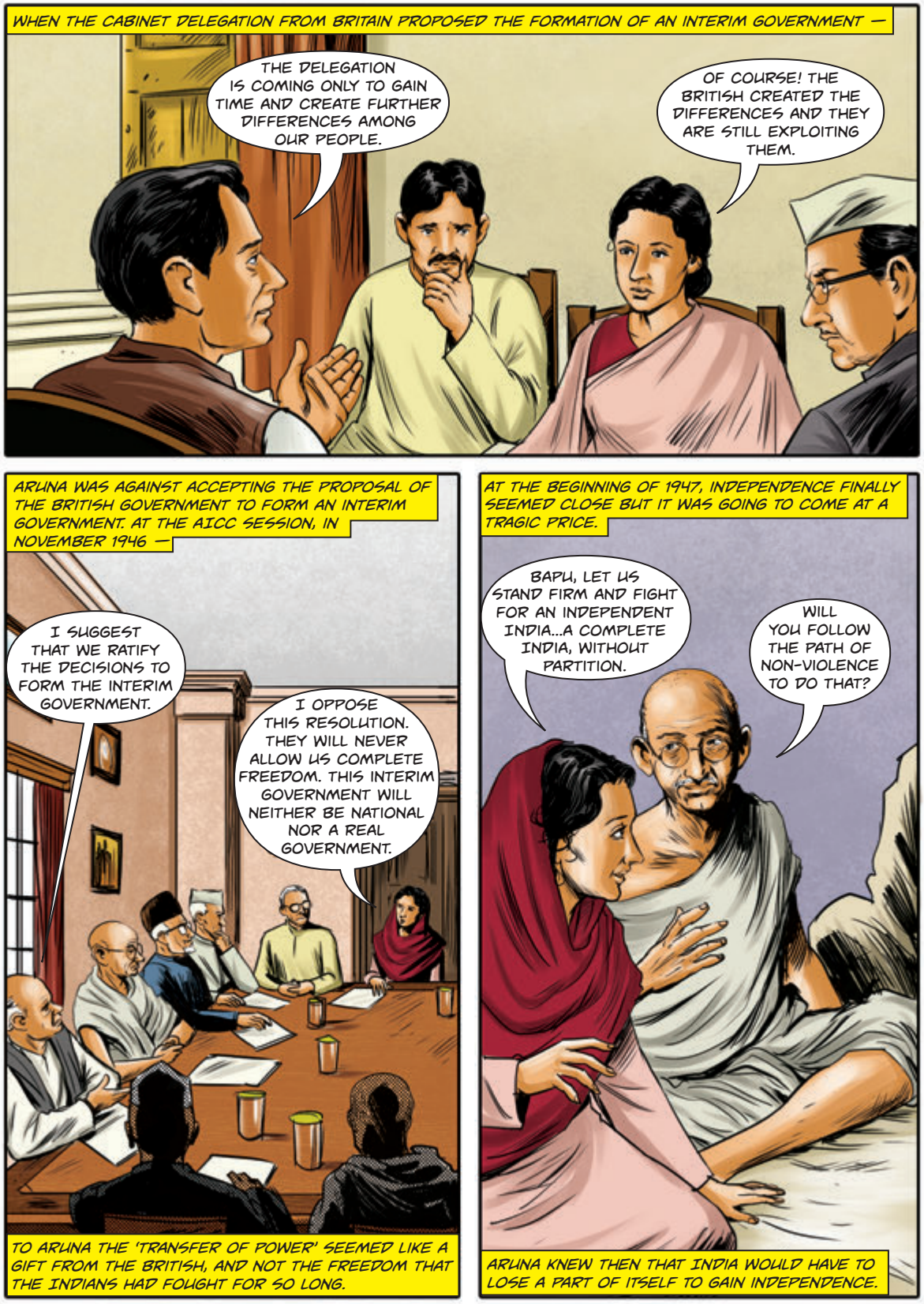
*TO GO INTO HIDING

^ACHYUT PATWARDHAN WAS A FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO HAD ALSO GONE INTO HIDING.

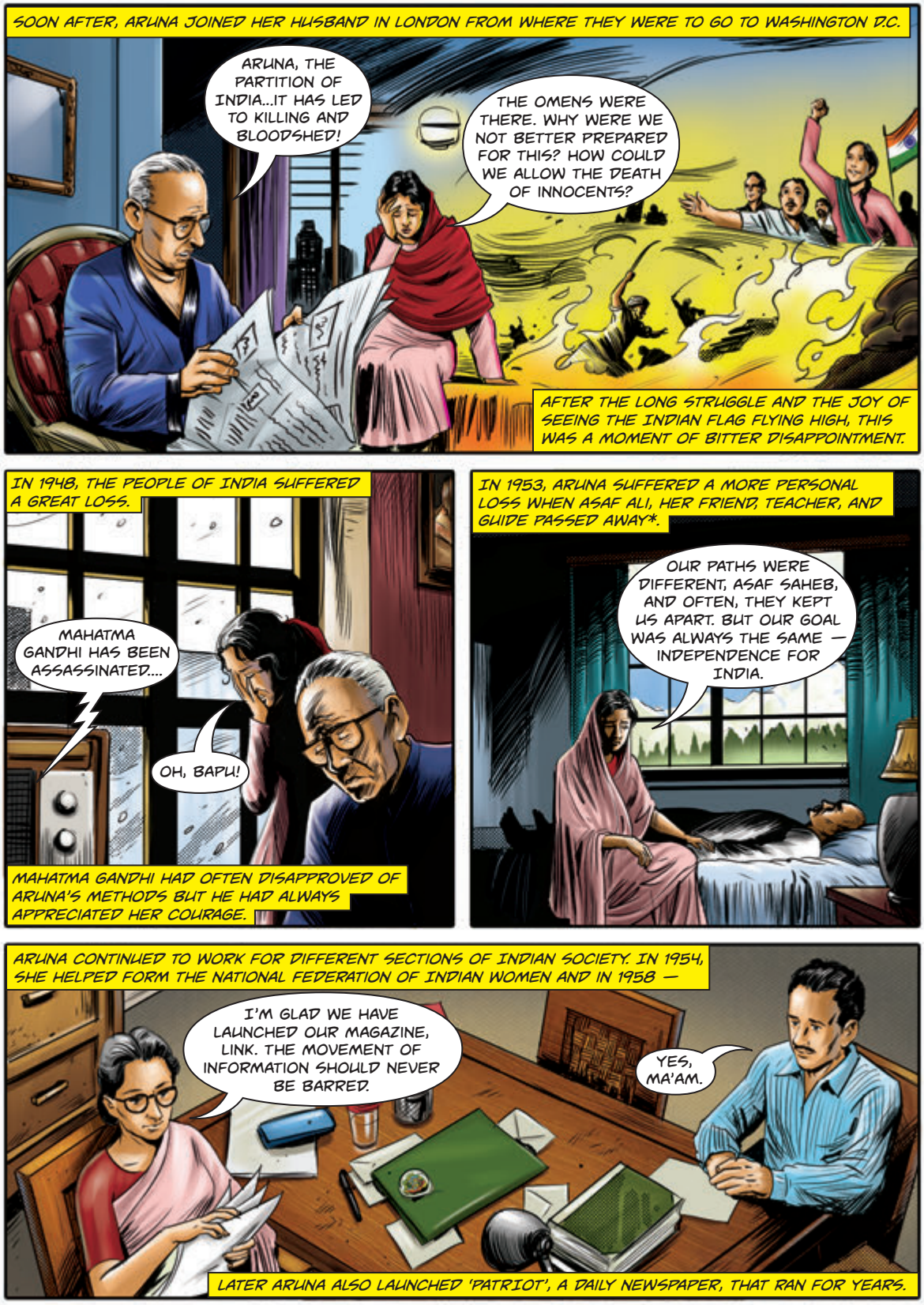
ARUNA AND THE OTHER LEADERS ORGANISED THE PEOPLE OF INDIA SO THEY COULD OFFER A DISCIPLINED RESISTANCE TO THE BRITISH POWERS.
THIS IS CONGRESS RADIO CALLING ON 42.34 METRES FROM SOMEWHERE IN INDIA.
THE LEADERS OF THE MOVEMENT WERE CONSTANTLY ON THE MOVE, TRYING TO EVADE BEING CAUGHT BY THE POLICE.
ARUNA DID NOT KEEP VERY GOOD HEALTH AND THAT WORRIED HER FRIENDS.
ARUNA JI, WE HAVE TO LEAVE AT ONCE BUT YOU ARE SO ILL AND WEAK.
JUST LET ME GET MY BAG AND WE CAN GO.
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OFFERED A REWARD OF RS 5000 FOR HER CAPTURE.
BAPU SAYS HE IS WORRIED ABOUT MY HEALTH AND URGES ME TO SURRENDER MYSELF AND CLAIM THE REWARD. HE SAYS WE CAN USE THE REWARD MONEY FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF OUR COUNTRYMEN BUT...IF I GIVE UP, WHO WILL DO MY WORK?
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DID EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO FIND ARUNA.
WHY ARE WE UNABLE TO ARREST ARUNA ASAF ALI? AFTER ALL, SHE IS JUST ONE WOMAN ON HER OWN!
SIR, THERE ARE NINE OF US LOOKING FOR HER BUT NINE LAKH PEOPLE, IN DELHI ALONE, WILLING TO HELP HER.



*NOW PRAYAGRAJ


WHEN THE CABINET DELEGATION FROM BRITAIN PROPOSED THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT —
THE DELEGATION IS COMING ONLY TO GAIN TIME AND CREATE FURTHER DIFFERENCES AMONG OUR PEOPLE.
OF COURSE! THE BRITISH CREATED THE DIFFERENCES AND THEY ARE STILL EXPLOITING THEM.
ARUNA WAS AGAINST ACCEPTING THE PROPOSAL OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO FORM AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. AT THE AICC SESSION, IN NOVEMBER 1946 —
I SUGGEST THAT WE RATIFY THE DECISIONS TO FORM THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.
I OPPOSE THIS RESOLUTION. THEY WILL NEVER ALLOW US COMPLETE FREEDOM. THIS INTERIM GOVERNMENT WILL NEITHER BE NATIONAL NOR A REAL GOVERNMENT.
TO ARUNA THE 'TRANSFER OF POWER' SEEMED LIKE A GIFT FROM THE BRITISH, AND NOT THE FREEDOM THAT THE INDIANS HAD FOUGHT FOR SO LONG.
AT THE BEGINNING OF 1947, INDEPENDENCE FINALLY SEEMED CLOSE BUT IT WAS GOING TO COME AT A TRAGIC PRICE.
BAPU, LET US STAND FIRM AND FIGHT FOR AN INDEPENDENT INDIA...A COMPLETE INDIA, WITHOUT PARTITION.
WILL YOU FOLLOW THE PATH OF NON-VIOLENCE TO DO THAT?
ARUNA KNEW THEN THAT INDIA WOULD HAVE TO LOSE A PART OF ITSELF TO GAIN INDEPENDENCE.

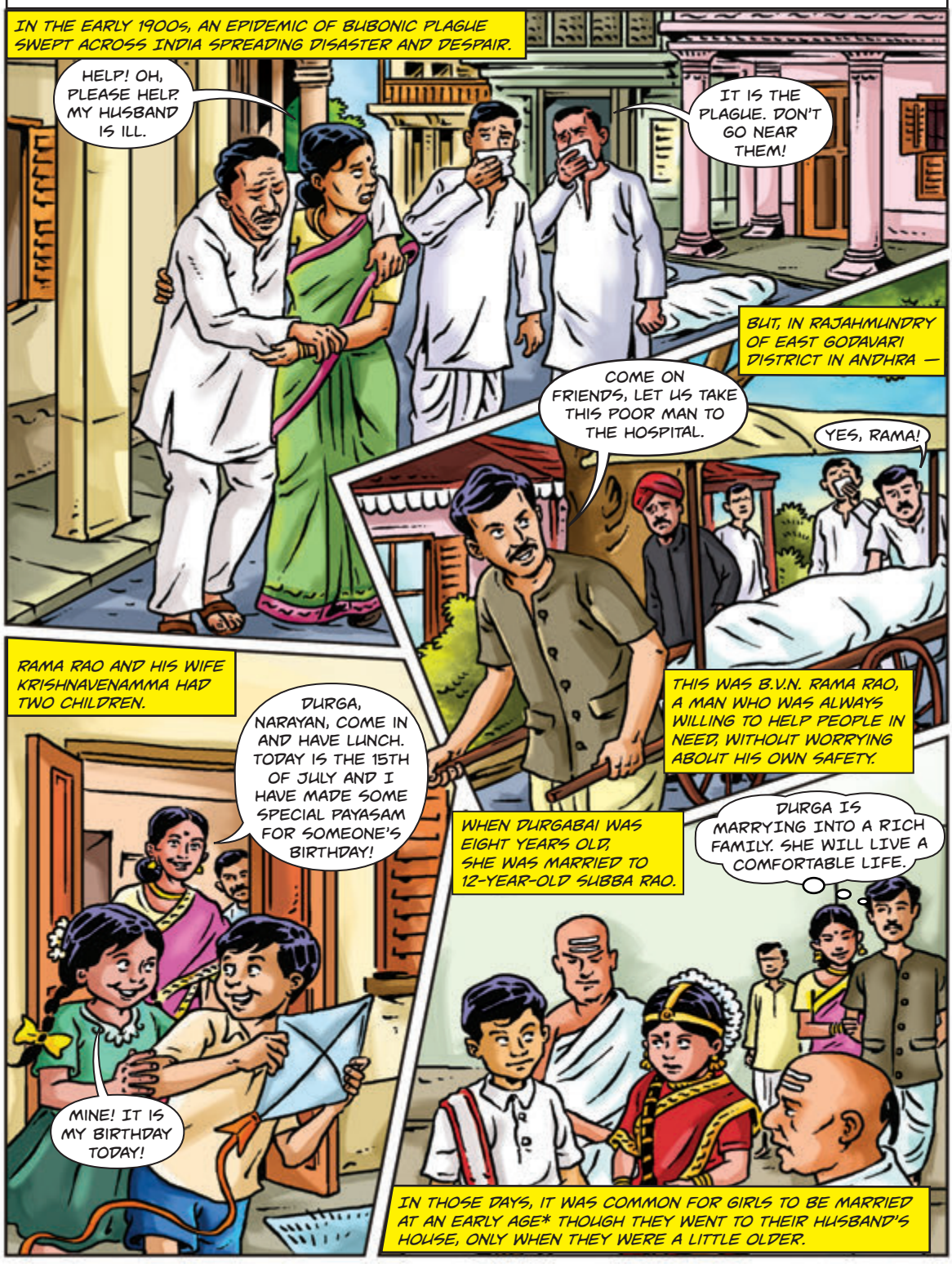
AS INDIANS PREPARED TO TAKE THE REINS OF THEIR COUNTRY INTO THEIR OWN HANDS, IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS WERE MADE. IN THE ASAF ALI HOUSEHOLD —
I HAVE BEEN APPOINTED THE FIRST AMBASSADOR OF INDEPENDENT INDIA TO THE USA.
THAT IS A GREAT HONOUR INDEED, ASAF SAHEB, BUT I CANNOT LEAVE MY COUNTRY WHEN IT MOST NEEDS ME.
MAHATMA GANDHI TRIED TO PERSUADE ARUNA TO ACCOMPANY ASAF ALI TO WASHINGTON BUT SHE STAYED FIRM.
ASAF ALI LEFT FOR WASHINGTON ON 7 FEBRUARY, 1947.
ALL THE BEST, ASAF SAHEB.
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, ARUNA.
ARUNA'S DECISION AROUSED PEOPLE'S CURIOSITY. AT A PUBLIC MEETING IN LAHORE —
PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW WHY I HAVE NOT GONE TO WASHINGTON WITH MY HUSBAND. BUT IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A MOTHER TO LEAVE HER AILING CHILD?
WHAT NOBLE THOUGHTS!
SHE IS A TRUE PATRIOT.
ON 15 AUGUST, 1947, THE MOMENT EVERY INDIAN HAD DREAMT OF AND WORKED FOR, FINALLY ARRIVED.



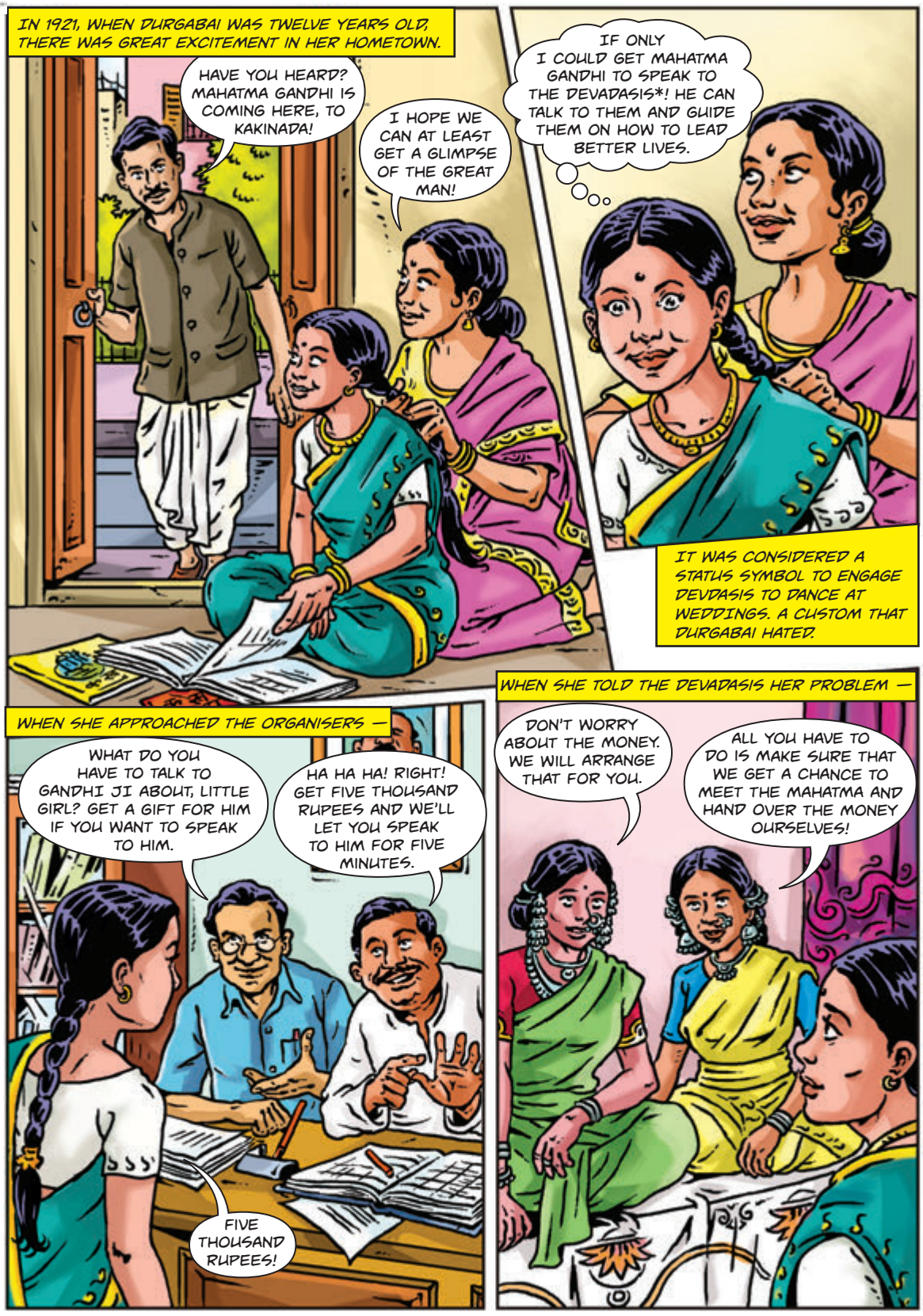
*ASAF ALI WAS AT THAT TIME INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO SWITZERLAND AND ARUNA WAS VISITING HIM.

IN 1958, ARUNA ASAF ALI EMBARKED ON A NEW ROLE.
YOU HAVE BEEN VOTED MAYOR OF DELHI. WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE FOR THIS CITY?
WHAT I HAVE ALWAYS DONE. I WILL SERVE MY COUNTRY TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES!
ARUNA KEPT HER WORD — ORGANISING ADULT LITERACY CENTRES, PROVIDING MEDICAL AID AND ESTABLISHING EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES FOR WOMEN.
IN 1964, ARUNA WAS AWARDED THE LENIN INTERNATIONAL PEACE PRIZE...
...AND THE PADMA VIBHUSHAN IN 1992.
IN HER LATER YEARS, ARUNA WAS OFTEN UNHAPPY WITH WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE COUNTRY. IN AN INTERVIEW IN 1991, WHEN SHE WAS 82 YEARS OLD —
ARUNA JI, YOU PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT. TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT IT!
GANDHI JI INSPIRED US. 'DO OR DIE' HE SAID AND WE RESPONDED TO THE CALL. SIGH! MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN.
ON 29 JULY, 1996, ARUNA ASAF ALI PASSED AWAY. WITH HER DEATH INDIA LOST A FEARLESS CAMPAIGNER FOR ITS RIGHTS AND A VIBRANT CHAPTER OF INDIAN HISTORY CAME TO A CLOSE.
ARUNA ASAF ALI WAS AWARDED THE BHARAT RATNA POSTHUMOUSLY IN 1997.

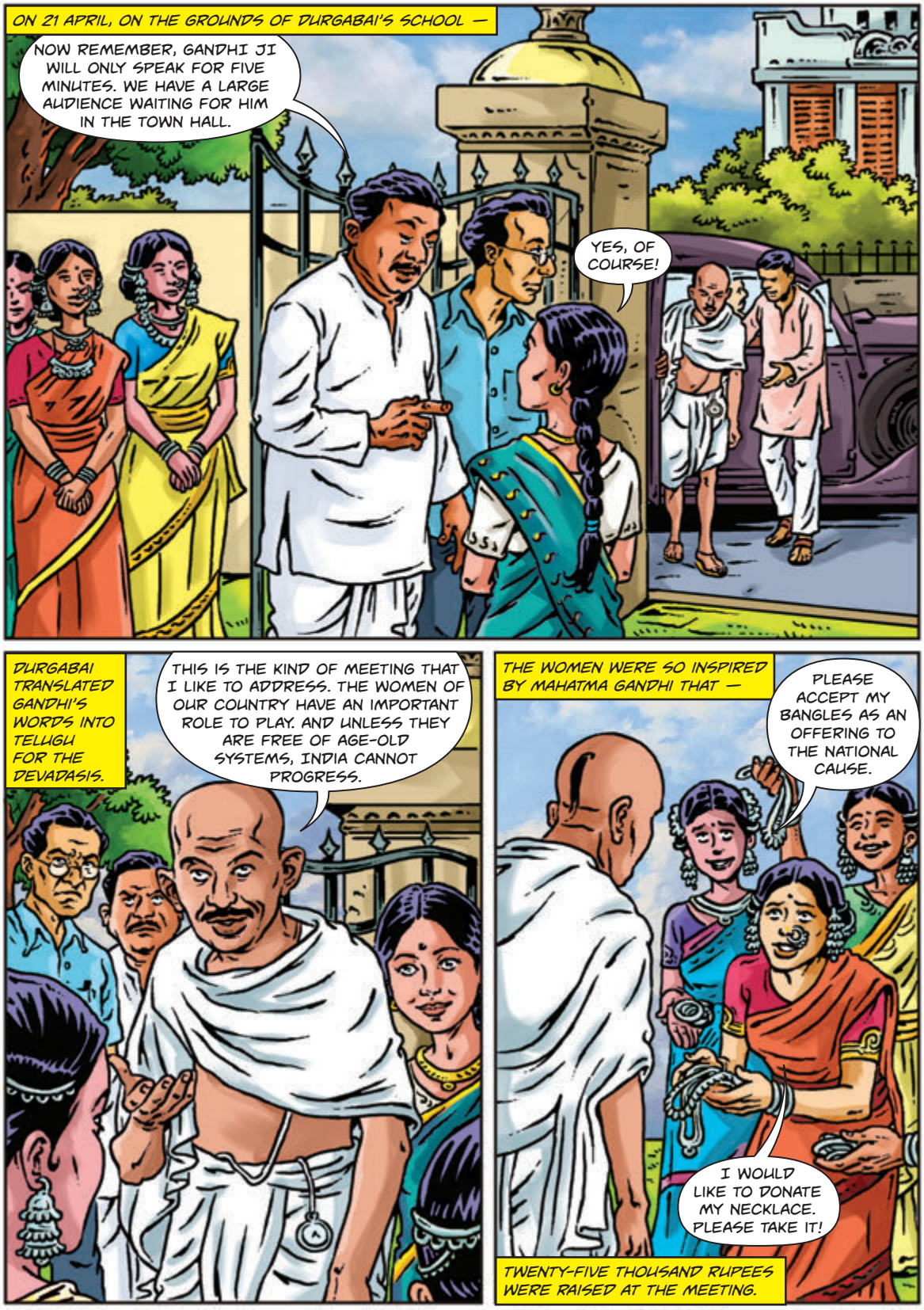
Durgabai Deshmukh

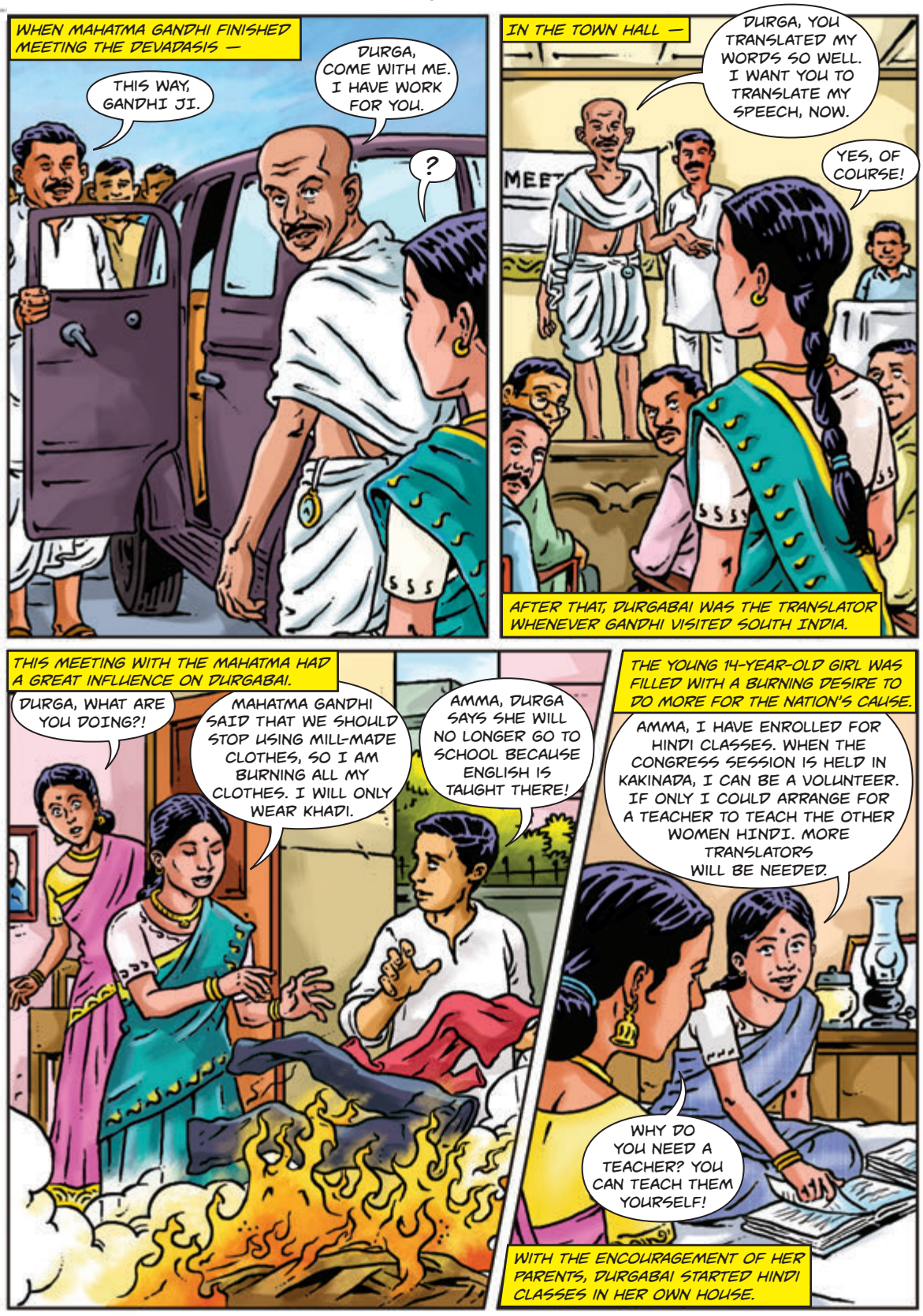


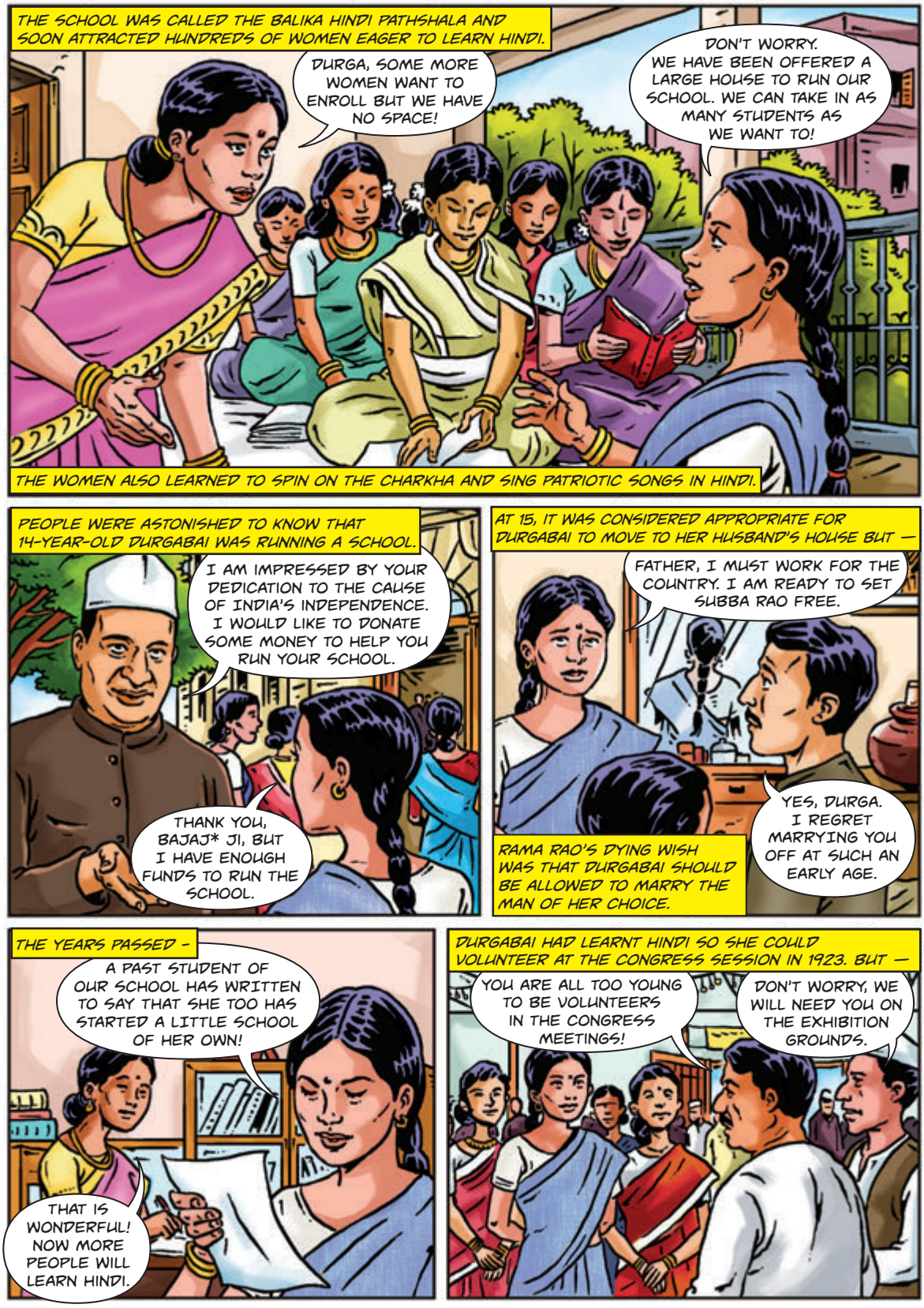
*THIS TRADITION HAS NOW BEEN BANNED.



*WOMEN WHO WERE DEDICATED TO A TEMPLE AND FREQUENTLY EXPLOITED

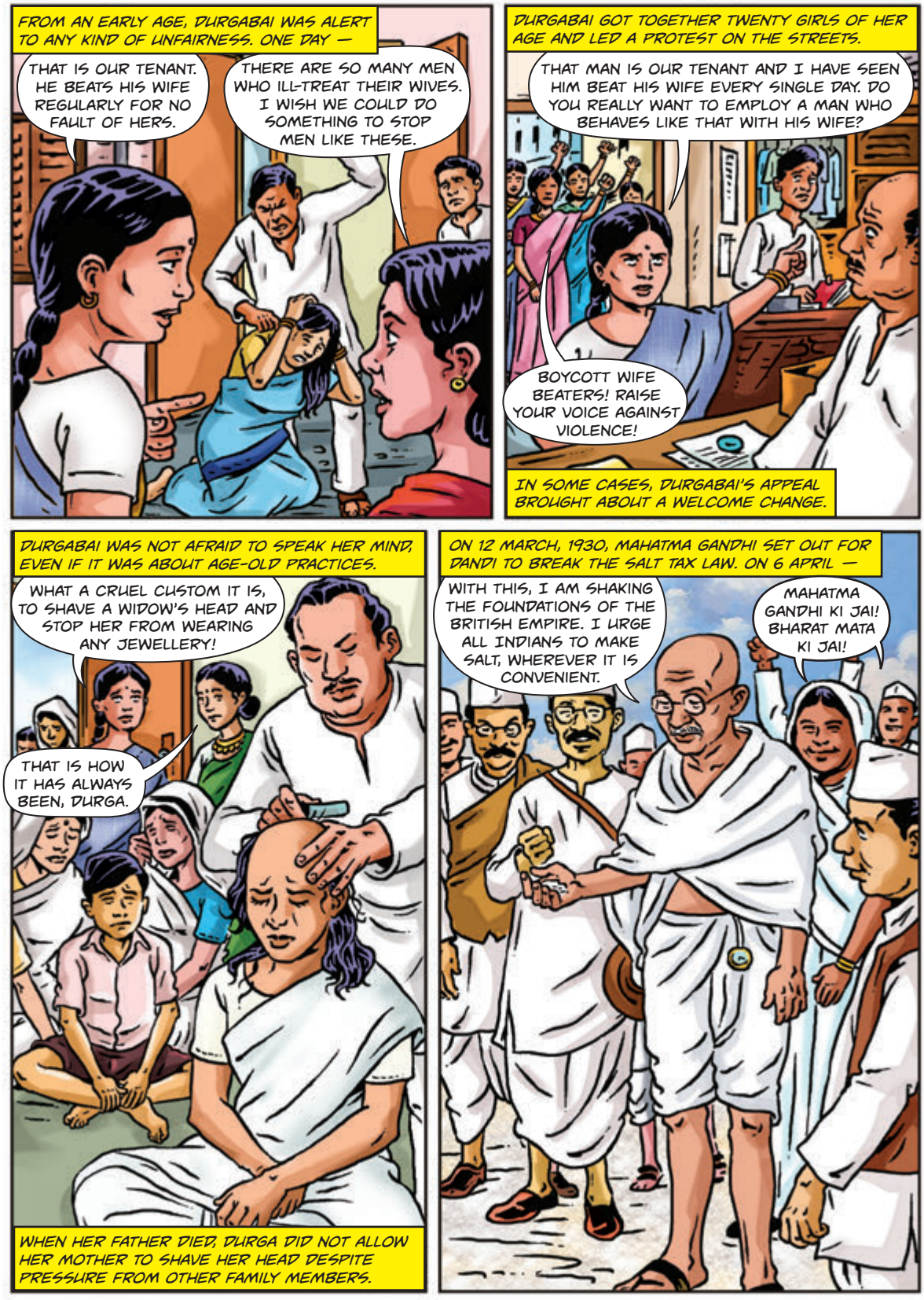

ON 21 APRIL, ON THE GROUNDS OF DURGABAI'S SCHOOL —
NOW REMEMBER, GANDHI JI WILL ONLY SPEAK FOR FIVE MINUTES. WE HAVE A LARGE AUDIENCE WAITING FOR HIM IN THE TOWN HALL.
YES, OF COURSE!
DURGABAI TRANSLATED GANDHI'S WORDS INTO TELUGU FOR THE DEVADASIS.
THIS IS THE KIND OF MEETING THAT I LIKE TO ADDRESS. THE WOMEN OF OUR COUNTRY HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY. AND UNLESS THEY ARE FREE OF AGE-OLD SYSTEMS, INDIA CANNOT PROGRESS.
THE WOMEN WERE SO INSPIRED BY MAHATMA GANDHI THAT —
PLEASE ACCEPT MY BANGLES AS AN OFFERING TO THE NATIONAL CAUSE.
I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE MY NECKLACE. PLEASE TAKE IT!
TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND RUPEES WERE RAISED AT THE MEETING.

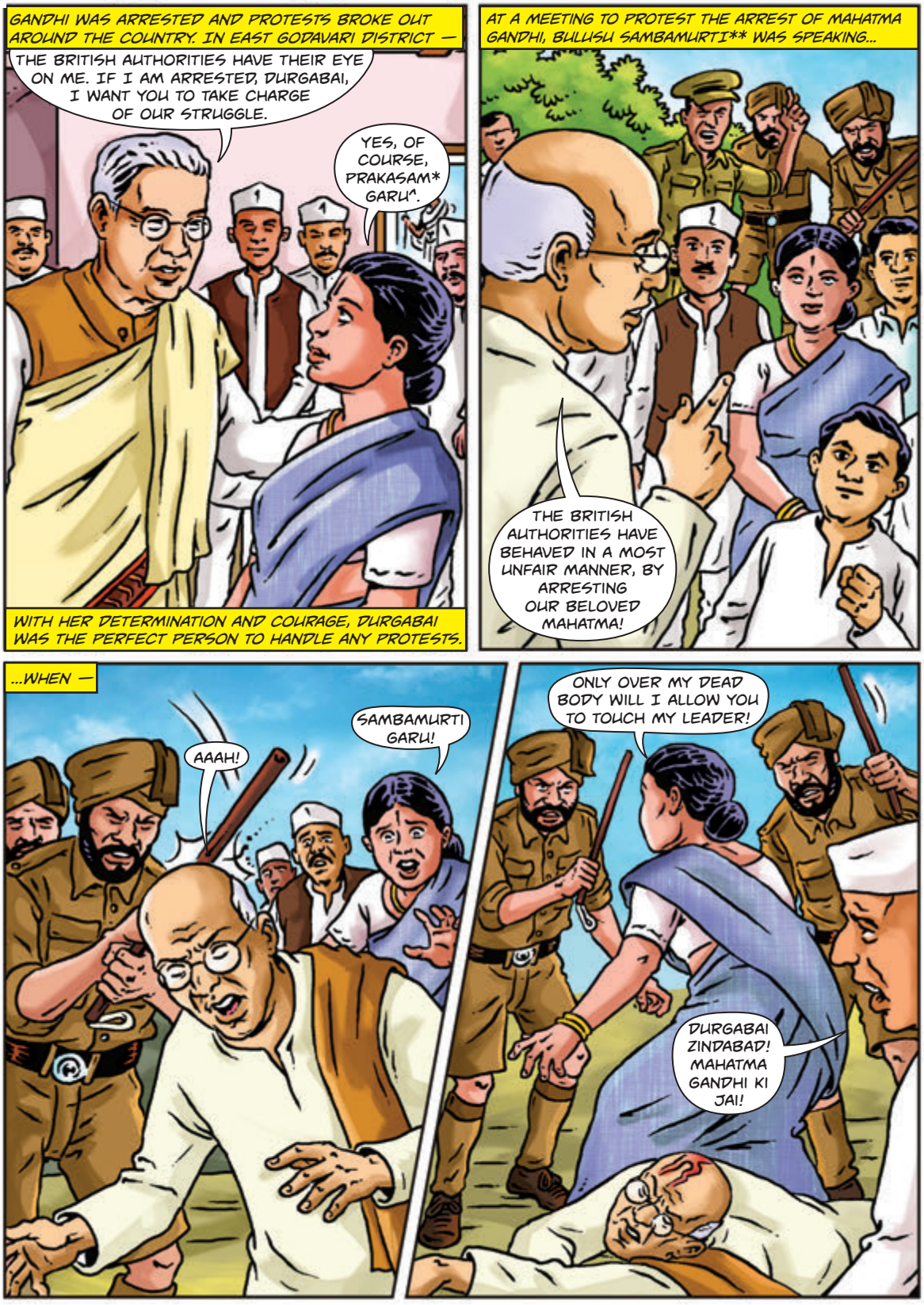

WHEN MAHATMA GANDHI FINISHED MEETING THE DEVADASIS —
THIS WAY, GANDHI JI.
DURGA, COME WITH ME. I HAVE WORK FOR YOU.
?
IN THE TOWN HALL —
DURGA, YOU TRANSLATED MY WORDS SO WELL. I WANT YOU TO TRANSLATE MY SPEECH, NOW.
YES, OF COURSE!
AFTER THAT, DURGABAI WAS THE TRANSLATOR WHENEVER GANDHI VISITED SOUTH INDIA.
THIS MEETING WITH THE MAHATMA HAD A GREAT INFLUENCE ON DURGABAI.
DURGA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
MAHATMA GANDHI SAID THAT WE SHOULD STOP USING MILL-MADE CLOTHES, SO I AM BURNING ALL MY CLOTHES. I WILL ONLY WEAR KHADI.
AMMA, DURGA SAYS SHE WILL NO LONGER GO TO SCHOOL BECAUSE ENGLISH IS TAUGHT THERE!
THE YOUNG 14-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS FILLED WITH A BURNING DESIRE TO DO MORE FOR THE NATION'S CAUSE.
AMMA, I HAVE ENROLLED FOR HINDI CLASSES. WHEN THE CONGRESS SESSION IS HELD IN KAKINADA, I CAN BE A VOLUNTEER. IF ONLY I COULD ARRANGE FOR A TEACHER TO TEACH THE OTHER WOMEN HINDI. MORE TRANSLATORS WILL BE NEEDED.
WHY DO YOU NEED A TEACHER? YOU CAN TEACH THEM YOURSELF!
WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF HER PARENTS, DURGABAI STARTED HINDI CLASSES IN HER OWN HOUSE.



*JAMNALAL BAJAJ WAS AN INDUSTRIALIST AND FREEDOM FIGHTER.

AT THE EXHIBITION —
NOW REMEMBER, YOUR JOB IS TO STAND AT THE ENTRANCE AND MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE HAS A TICKET.
YOU WILL STOP ANYONE WITHOUT A TICKET FROM ENTERING.
DURGABAI FOLLOWED THE INSTRUCTIONS SINCERELY.
STOP! WHERE IS YOUR TICKET?
I...I DON'T HAVE A TICKET AND....
YOU SILLY GIRL, DON'T YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS?
I KNOW THAT THIS IS PANDIT NEHRU BUT I AM ONLY FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS YOU GAVE ME. HE CANNOT ENTER THE EXHIBITION WITHOUT A TICKET.
DON'T SCOLD HER FOR DOING HER DUTY. WE NEED COURAGEOUS GIRLS LIKE HER. I WANT TO KNOW THE NAME OF THIS BRAVE YOUNG WOMAN!
PANDIT JI, MY NAME IS DURGABAI.


FROM AN EARLY AGE, DURGABAI WAS ALERT TO ANY KIND OF UNFAIRNESS. ONE DAY —
THAT IS OUR TENANT. HE BEATS HIS WIFE REGULARLY FOR NO FAULT OF HERS.
THERE ARE SO MANY MEN WHO ILL-TREAT THEIR WIVES. I WISH WE COULD DO SOMETHING TO STOP MEN LIKE THESE.
DURGABAI GOT TOGETHER TWENTY GIRLS OF HER AGE AND LED A PROTEST ON THE STREETS.
THAT MAN IS OUR TENANT AND I HAVE SEEN HIM BEAT HIS WIFE EVERY SINGLE DAY. DO YOU REALLY WANT TO EMPLOY A MAN WHO BEHAVES LIKE THAT WITH HIS WIFE?
BOYCOTT WIFE BEATERS! RAISE YOUR VOICE AGAINST VIOLENCE!
IN SOME CASES, DURGABAI'S APPEAL BROUGHT ABOUT A WELCOME CHANGE.
DURGABAI WAS NOT AFRAID TO SPEAK HER MIND, EVEN IF IT WAS ABOUT AGE-OLD PRACTICES.
WHAT A CRUEL CUSTOM IT IS, TO SHAVE A WIDOW'S HEAD AND STOP HER FROM WEARING ANY JEWELLERY!
THAT IS HOW IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN, DURGA.
WHEN HER FATHER DIED, DURGA DID NOT ALLOW HER MOTHER TO SHAVE HER HEAD DESPITE PRESSURE FROM OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.
ON 12 MARCH, 1930, MAHATMA GANDHI SET OUT FOR DANDI TO BREAK THE SALT TAX LAW. ON 6 APRIL —
WITH THIS, I AM SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE. I URGE ALL INDIANS TO MAKE SALT, WHEREVER IT IS CONVENIENT.
MAHATMA GANDHI KI JAI! BHARAT MATA KI JAI!

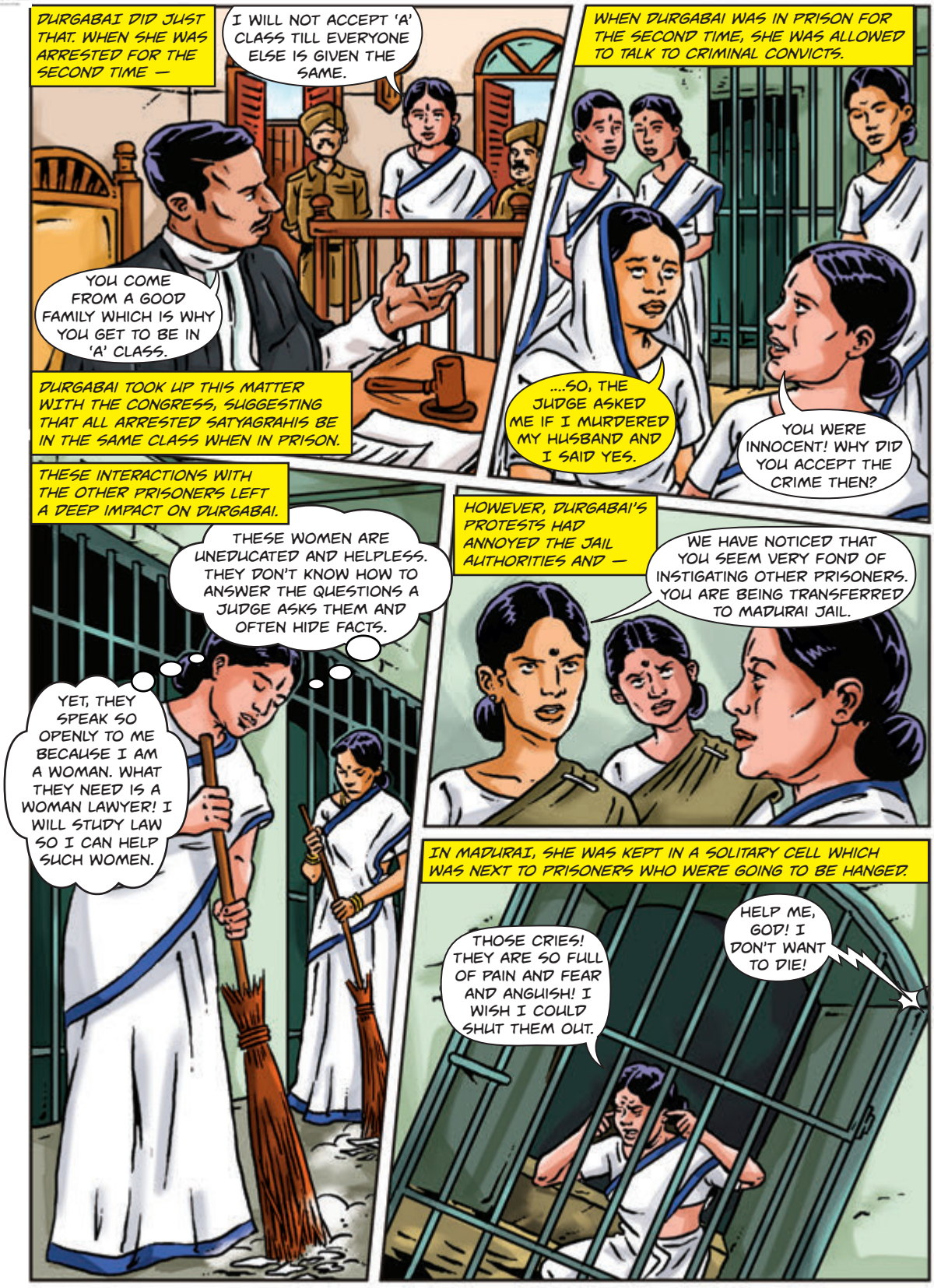


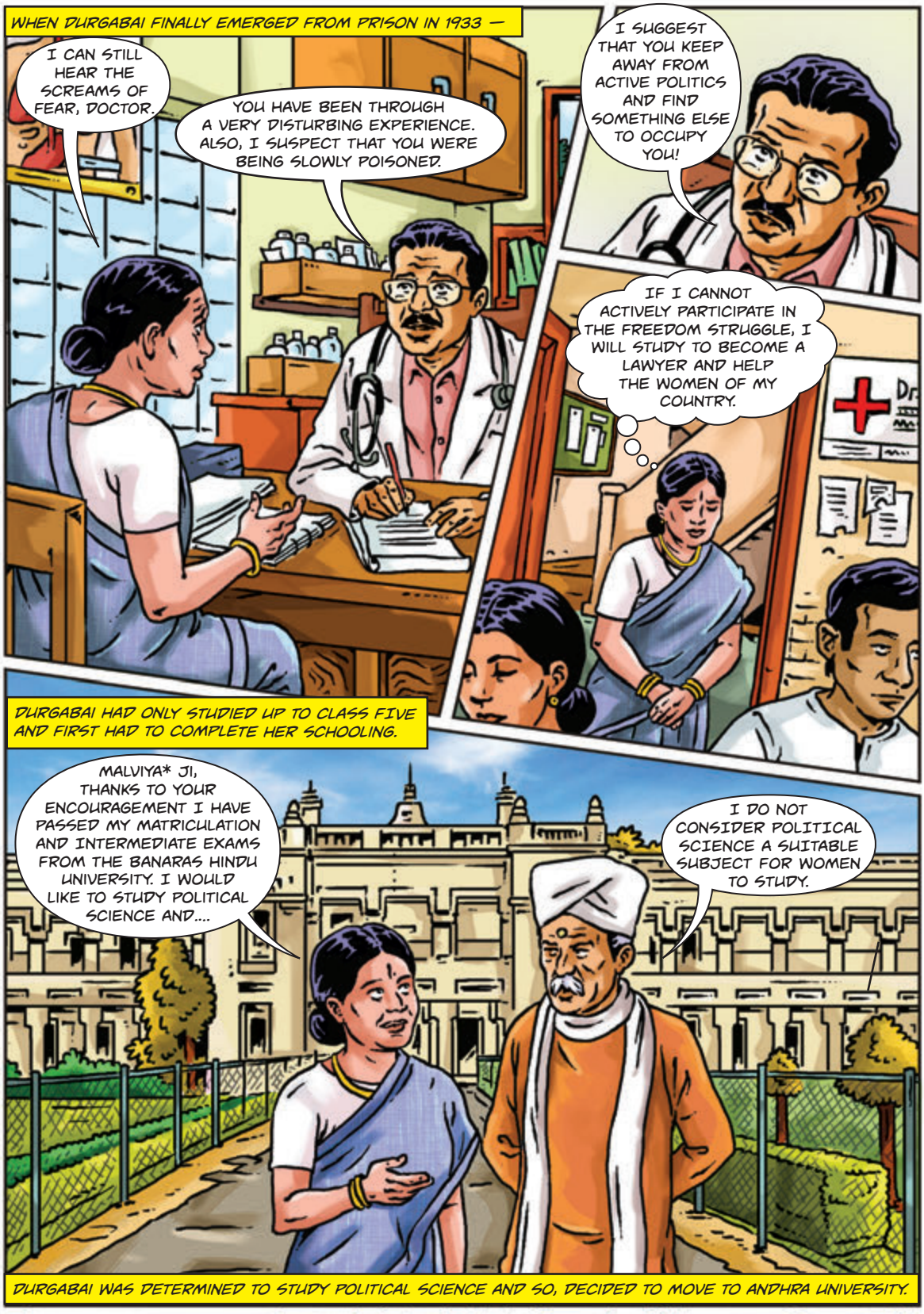
*TANGUTURI PRAKASAM WAS A LAWYER AND FREEDOM FIGHTER WHO BECAME THE FIRST CHIEF MINISTER OF ANDHRA PRADESH AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

^TERM OF RESPECT

**BULUSU SAMBAMURTI WAS A LAWYER AND FREEDOM FIGHTER.

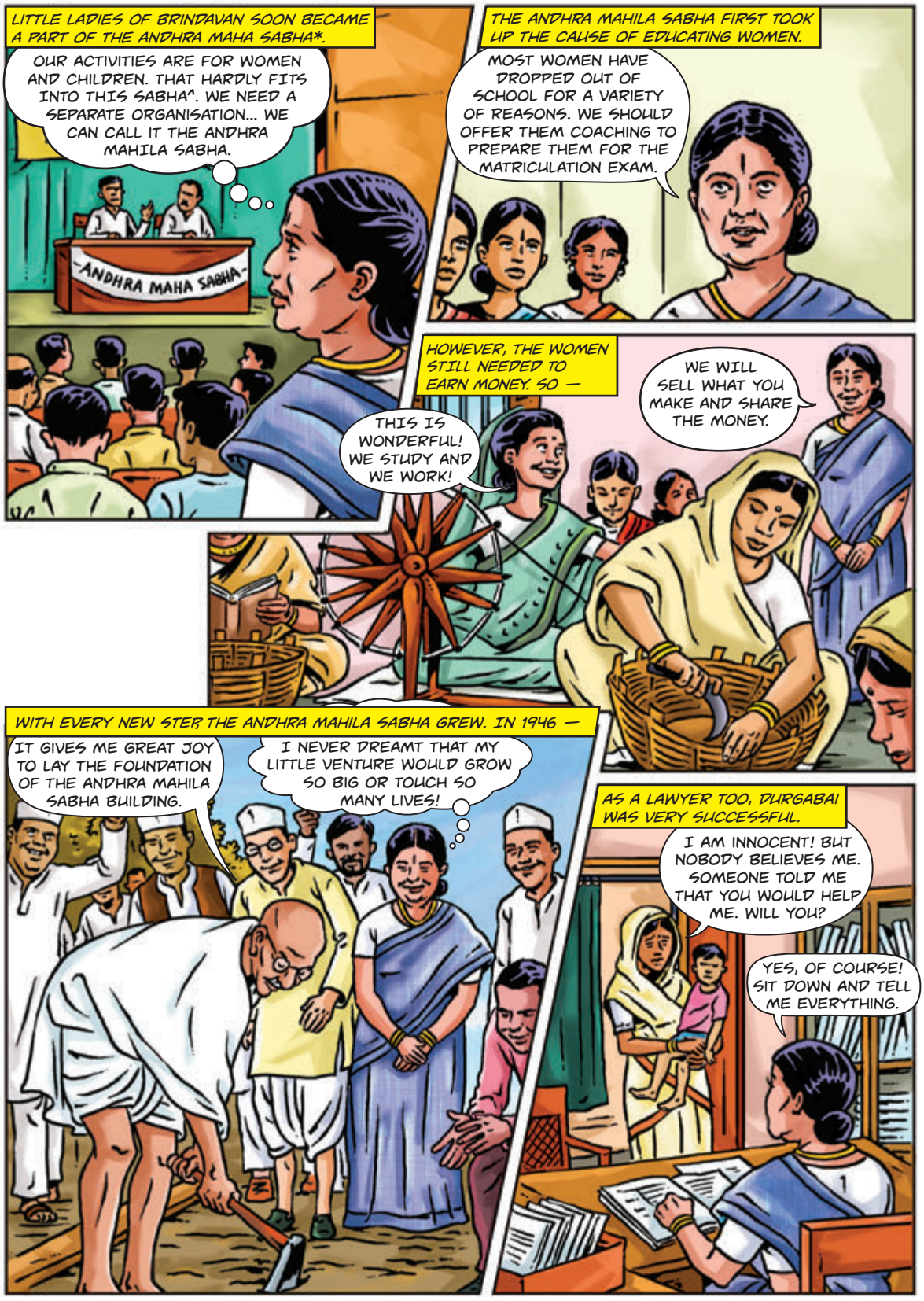
*NOW KNOWN AS CHENNAI


DURGABAI DID JUST THAT. WHEN SHE WAS ARRESTED FOR THE SECOND TIME —
I WILL NOT ACCEPT 'A' CLASS TILL EVERYONE ELSE IS GIVEN THE SAME.
YOU COME FROM A GOOD FAMILY WHICH IS WHY YOU GET TO BE IN 'A' CLASS.
DURGABAI TOOK UP THIS MATTER WITH THE CONGRESS, SUGGESTING THAT ALL ARRESTED SATYAGRAHIS BE IN THE SAME CLASS WHEN IN PRISON.
WHEN DURGABAI WAS IN PRISON FOR THE SECOND TIME, SHE WAS ALLOWED TO TALK TO CRIMINAL CONVICTS.
YOU WERE INNOCENT! WHY DID YOU ACCEPT THE CRIME THEN?
...SO, THE JUDGE ASKED ME IF I MURDERED MY HUSBAND AND I SAID YES.
THESE INTERACTIONS WITH THE OTHER PRISONERS LEFT A DEEP IMPACT ON DURGABAI.
THESE WOMEN ARE UNEDUCATED AND HELPLESS. THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS A JUDGE ASKS THEM AND OFTEN HIDE FACTS.
YET, THEY SPEAK SO OPENLY TO ME BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN. WHAT THEY NEED IS A WOMAN LAWYER! I WILL STUDY LAW SO I CAN HELP SUCH WOMEN.
HOWEVER, DURGABAI'S PROTESTS HAD ANNOYED THE JAIL AUTHORITIES AND —
WE HAVE NOTICED THAT YOU SEEM VERY FOND OF INSTIGATING OTHER PRISONERS. YOU ARE BEING TRANSFERRED TO MADURAI JAIL.
IN MADURAI, SHE WAS KEPT IN A SOLITARY CELL WHICH WAS NEXT TO PRISONERS WHO WERE GOING TO BE HANGED.
THOSE CRIES! THEY ARE SO FULL OF PAIN AND FEAR AND ANGUISH! I WISH I COULD SHUT THEM OUT.
HELP ME, GOD! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!



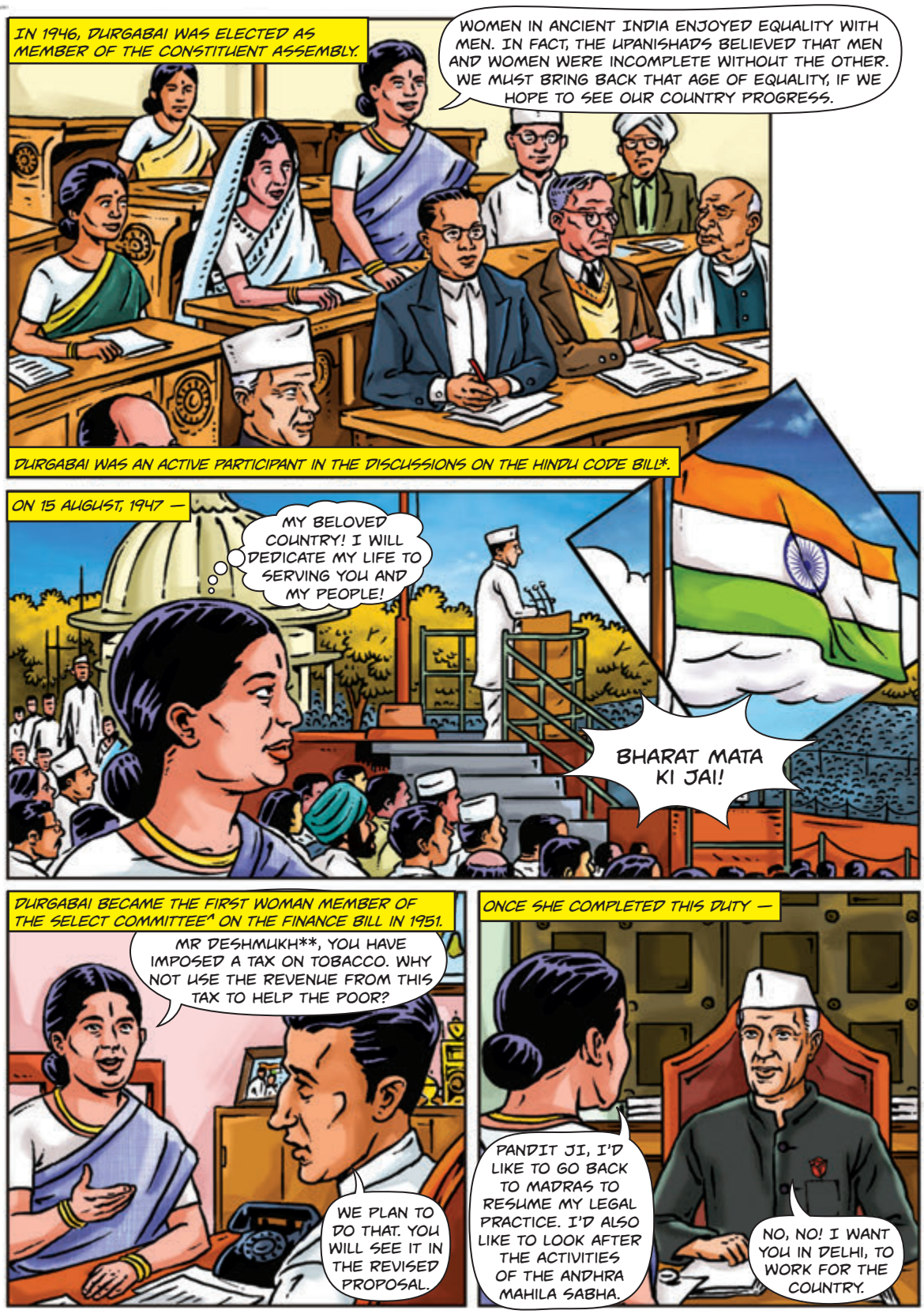
*PANDIT MADAN MOHAN MALVIYA WAS A SCHOLAR, EDUCATIONAL REFORMER, FREEDOM FIGHTER, ALSO THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY.

*DR C.R. REDDY WAS THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF ANDHRA UNIVERSITY.



*FOUNDED BY THE PEOPLE OF ANDHRA, WHO LIVED IN MADRAS, THIS WAS A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION FOR MEN AND WOMEN.

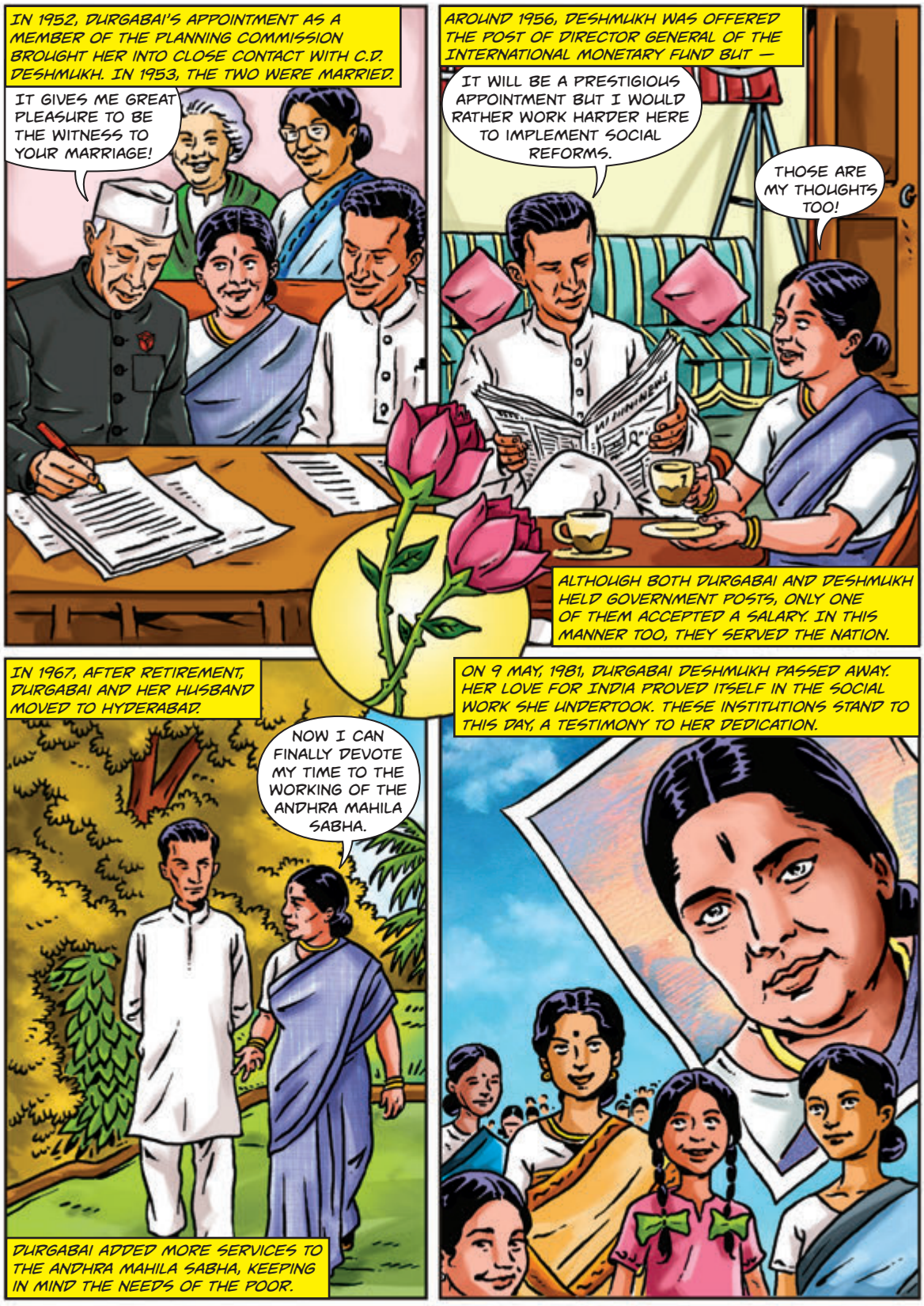
^ORGANISATION OR FORUM



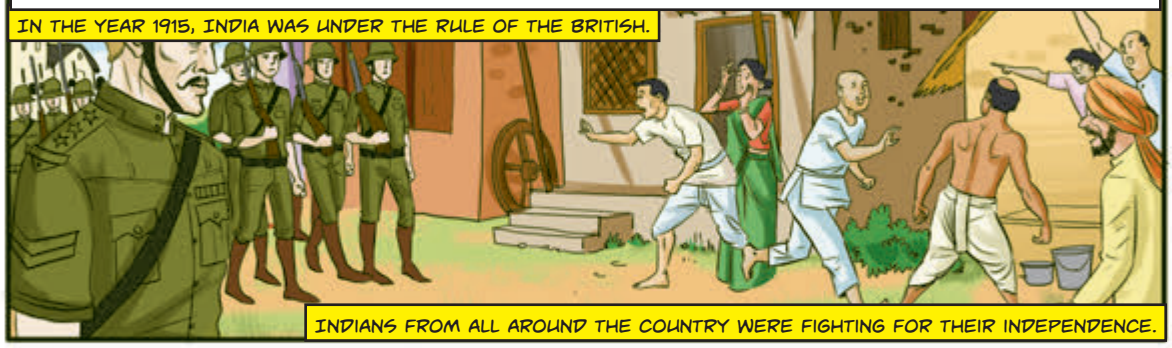
*BILLS THAT AIMED TO REFORM THE HINDU PERSONAL LAW

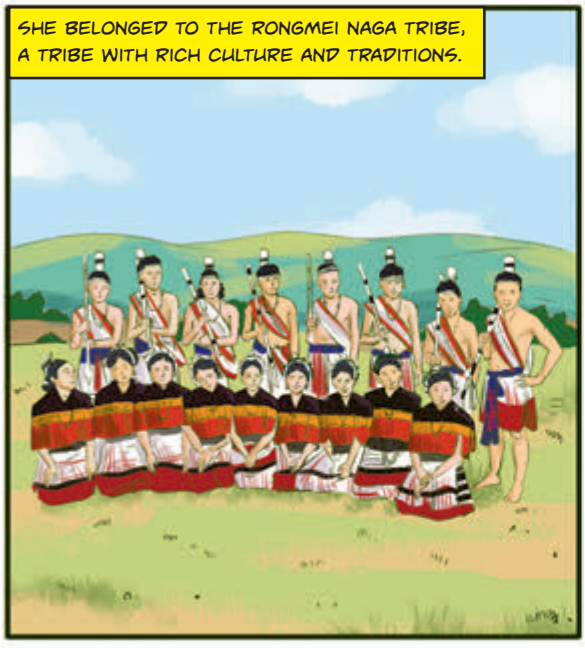
^A COMMITTEE THAT EXAMINED THE COUNTRY'S TAXATION POLICY

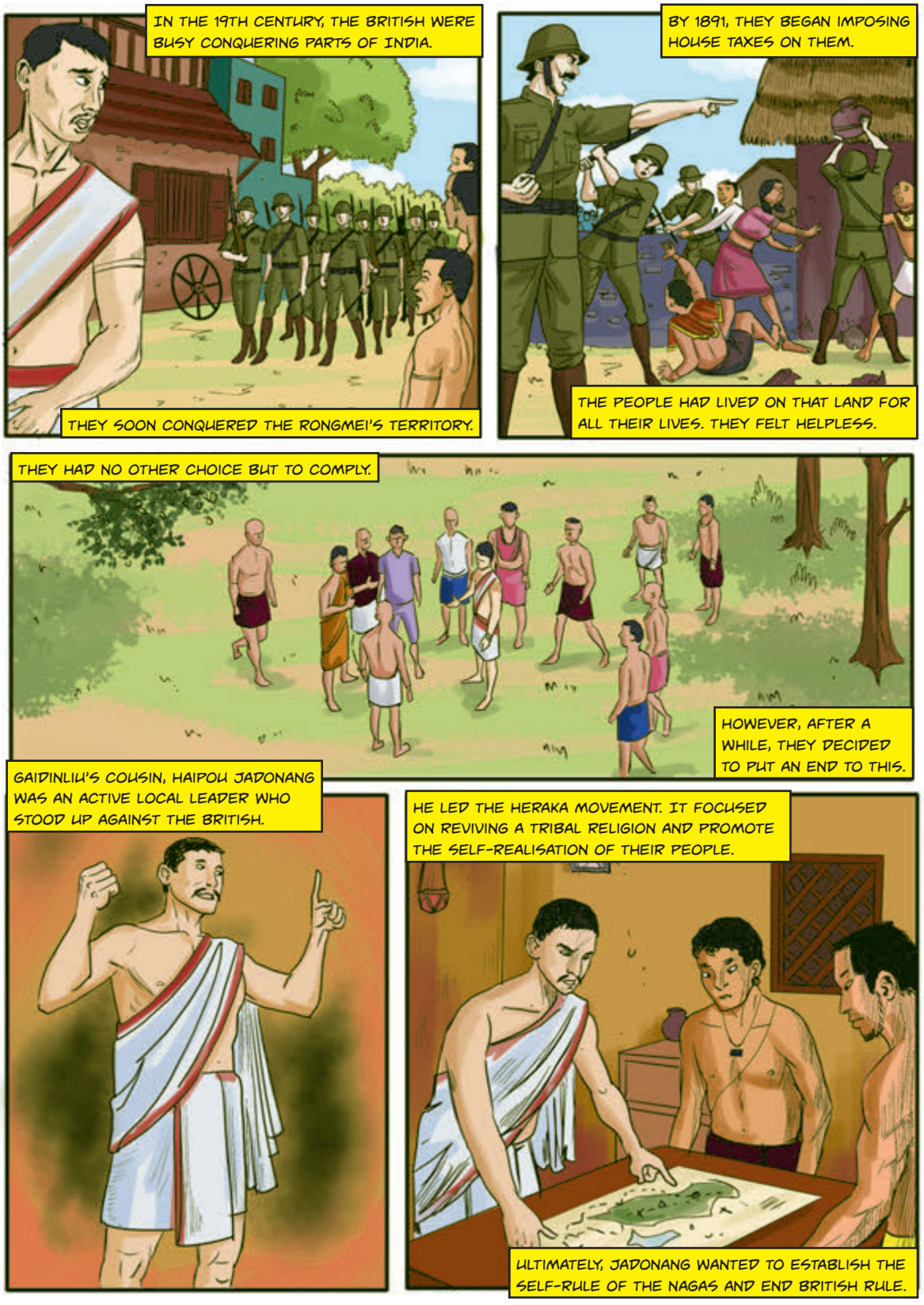
**C.D. DESHMUKH WAS THE FINANCE MINISTER OF INDIA FROM 1950–56.


IN 1952, DURGABAI'S APPOINTMENT AS A MEMBER OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION BROUGHT HER INTO CLOSE CONTACT WITH C.D. DESHMUKH. IN 1953, THE TWO WERE MARRIED.
IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE THE WITNESS TO YOUR MARRIAGE!
AROUND 1956, DESHMUKH WAS OFFERED THE POST OF DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND BUT —
IT WILL BE A PRESTIGIOUS APPOINTMENT BUT I WOULD RATHER WORK HARDER HERE TO IMPLEMENT SOCIAL REFORMS.
THOSE ARE MY THOUGHTS TOO!
ALTHOUGH BOTH DURGABAI AND DESHMUKH HELD GOVERNMENT POSTS, ONLY ONE OF THEM ACCEPTED A SALARY. IN THIS MANNER TOO, THEY SERVED THE NATION.
IN 1967, AFTER RETIREMENT, DURGABAI AND HER HUSBAND MOVED TO HYDERABAD.
NOW I CAN FINALLY DEVOTE MY TIME TO THE WORKING OF THE ANDHRA MAHILA SABHA.
DURGABAI ADDED MORE SERVICES TO THE ANDHRA MAHILA SABHA, KEEPING IN MIND THE NEEDS OF THE POOR.
ON 9 MAY, 1981, DURGABAI DESHMUKH PASSED AWAY. HER LOVE FOR INDIA PROVED ITSELF IN THE SOCIAL WORK SHE UNDERTOOK. THESE INSTITUTIONS STAND TO THIS DAY, A TESTIMONY TO HER DEDICATION.

Rani Gaidinliu





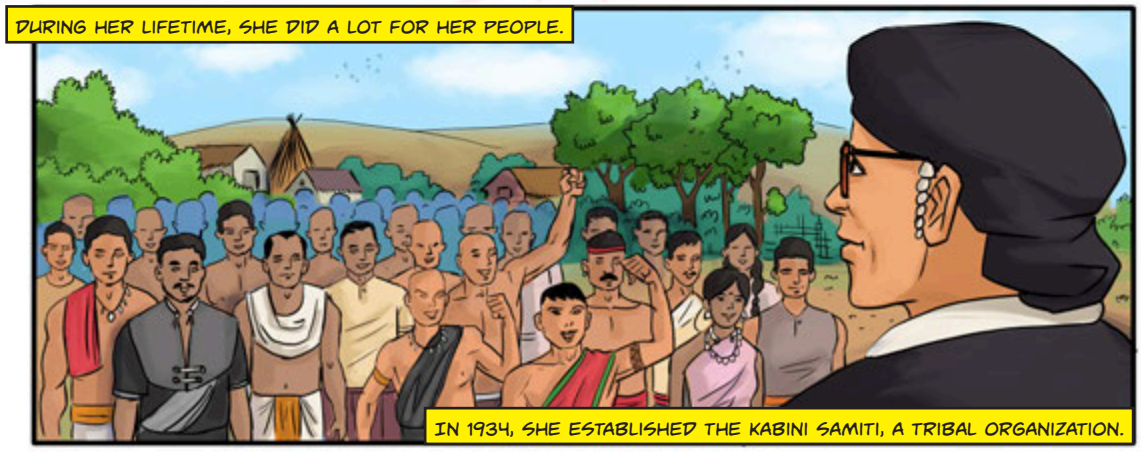

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, THE BRITISH WERE BUSY CONQUERING PARTS OF INDIA.
THEY SOON CONQUERED THE RONGMEI'S TERRITORY.
BY 1891, THEY BEGAN IMPOSING HOUSE TAXES ON THEM.
THE PEOPLE HAD LIVED ON THAT LAND FOR ALL THEIR LIVES. THEY FELT HELPLESS.
THEY HAD NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO COMPLY.
HOWEVER, AFTER A WHILE, THEY DECIDED TO PUT AN END TO THIS.
GAIDINLIU'S COUSIN, HAIPOU JADONANG WAS AN ACTIVE LOCAL LEADER WHO STOOD UP AGAINST THE BRITISH.
HE LED THE HERAKA MOVEMENT. IT FOCUSED ON REVIVING A TRIBAL RELIGION AND PROMOTE THE SELF-REALISATION OF THEIR PEOPLE.
ULTIMATELY, JADONANG WANTED TO ESTABLISH THE SELF-RULE OF THE NAGAS AND END BRITISH RULE.

GAIDINLIU WITNESSED THE ATROCITIES AGAINST HER PEOPLE. SHE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.
IN 1927, AT THE YOUNG AGE OF 13, GAIDNLIU JOINED THE HERAKA MOVEMENT.
UNFORTUNATELY, IN 1931, JADONANG WAS ARRESTED BY THE BRITISH AND EVENTUALLY HANGED.
THE HERAKA MOVEMENT HAD COME TO A HARD STOP.
THERE WAS A NEED FOR A LEADER. THAT'S WHEN AT THE AGE OF 16, GAIDNLIU DECIDED TO STEP UP.
SHE BECAME HER NOW DECEASED COUSIN'S SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL HEIR.
SHE LED A SERIES OF PROTESTS AGAINST THE BRITISH.
SHE EVEN WENT AROUND EDUCATING PEOPLE AND TELLING THEM TO NOT PAY TAXES TO THE BRITISH.
SEVERAL NAGAS DONATED TO HER CAUSE AND MANY EVEN JOINED HER AS VOLUNTEERS.
THIS ANGERED THE BRITISH. THEY BEGAN ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR HER.

GAIDNLIU EVADED THE POLICE AND KEPT HOPPING FROM ONE VILLAGE TO ANOTHER.
SHE TRAVELLED THROUGH VILLAGES ACROSS NAGALAND, ASSAM AND MANIPUR.
IN OCTOBER 1932, GAIDINLIU MOVED TO THE PULOMI VILLAGE.
THERE, HER FOLLOWERS STARTED BUILDING A WOODEN FORTRESS FOR HER PROTECTION.
HOWEVER, WHILE THE FORTRESS WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION, AN ASSAM RIFLES CONTINGENT LAUNCHED A SURPRISE ATTACK ON THE VILLAGE.
GAIDINLIU AND HER FOLLOWERS WERE PROMPTLY ARRESTED NEAR THE PULOMI VILLAGE.
FOR A 16-YEAR-OLD, SHE SHOWED UTMOST BRAVERY!
THERE, THE BRITISH SENTENCED HER TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT.
BETWEEN 1932 AND 1947, SHE WAS KEPT AT SEVERAL PRISONS ACROSS THE NORTHEAST.

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU MET HER IN 1937.
HE DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO ARRANGE FOR HER RELEASE.
IN AN INTERVIEW, HE EVEN CALLED HER THE DAUGHTER OF THE HILLS AND GAVE HER THE TITLE OF 'RANI'*
AIR
IN 1947, INDIA BECAME INDEPENDENT FROM THE BRITISH.
NOW THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA, NEHRU ORDERED FOR HER RELEASE.
AFTER LIVING IN THE PRISON LIFE FOR 14 YEARS, SHE WAS FINALLY RELEASED FROM TURA JAIL.
UPON HER RELEASE, SHE CONTINUED TO WORK FOR THE BETTERMENT OF HER PEOPLE.

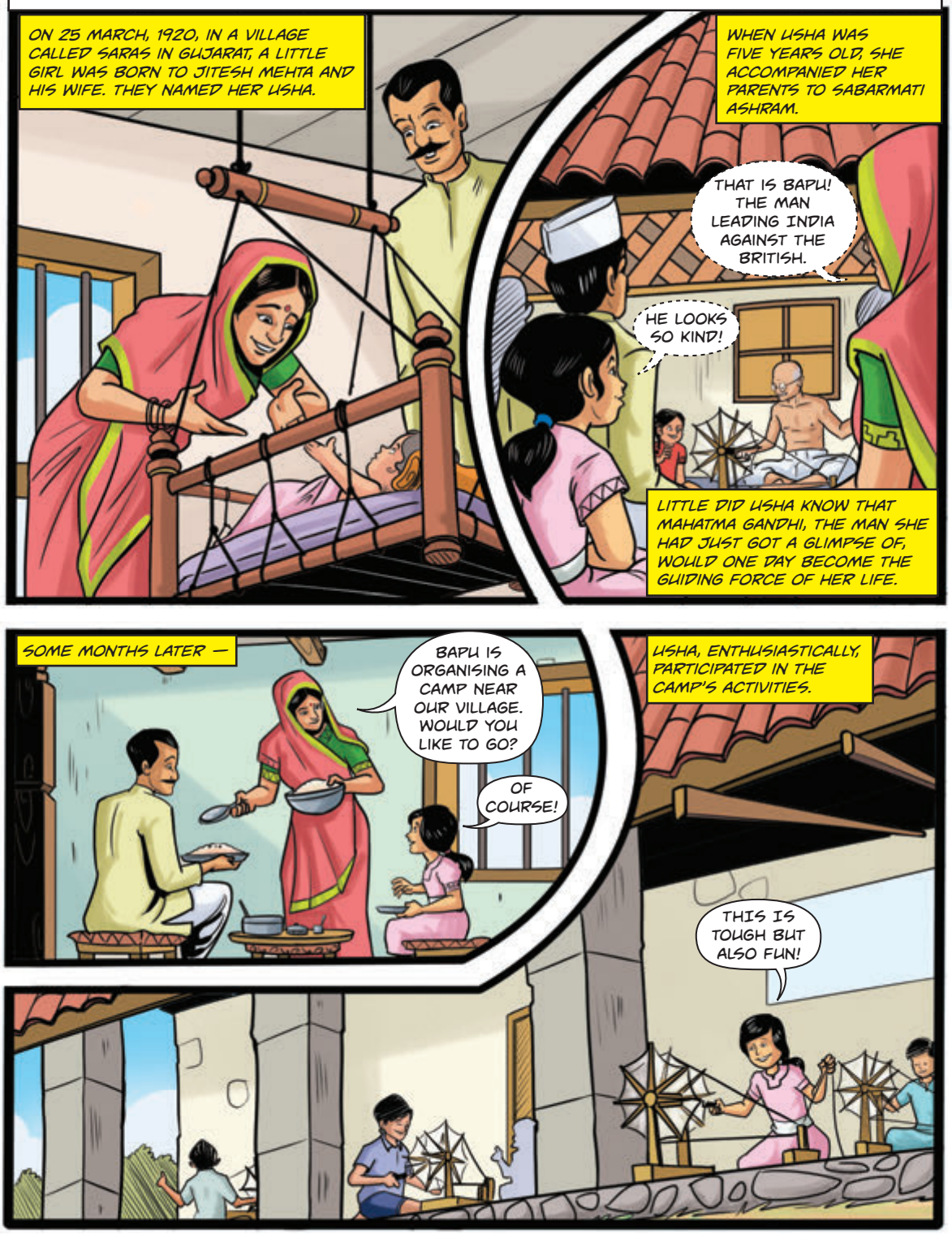
*QUEEN

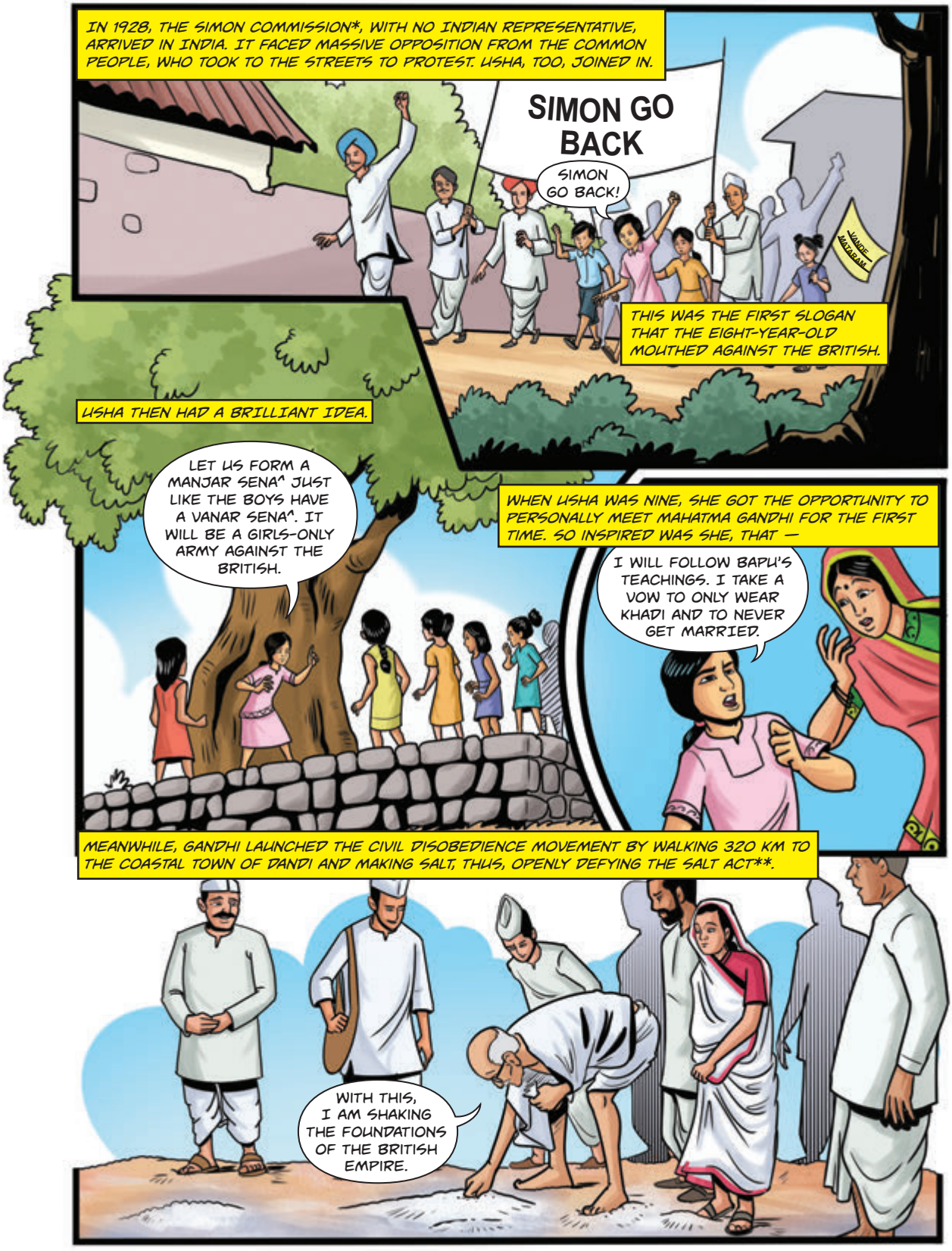


IN 1996 AND 2015 RESPECTIVELY, A POSTAL STAMP AND A COMMEMORATIVE COIN WERE ISSUED IN HER HONOUR BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

FROM HER BIRTH TO DEATH, RANI GAIDINLIU WAS A TRUE QUEEN WHO LIVED A LIFE SERVING FOR THE UPLIFTMENT AND BETTERMENT OF HER PEOPLE.

Usha Mehta

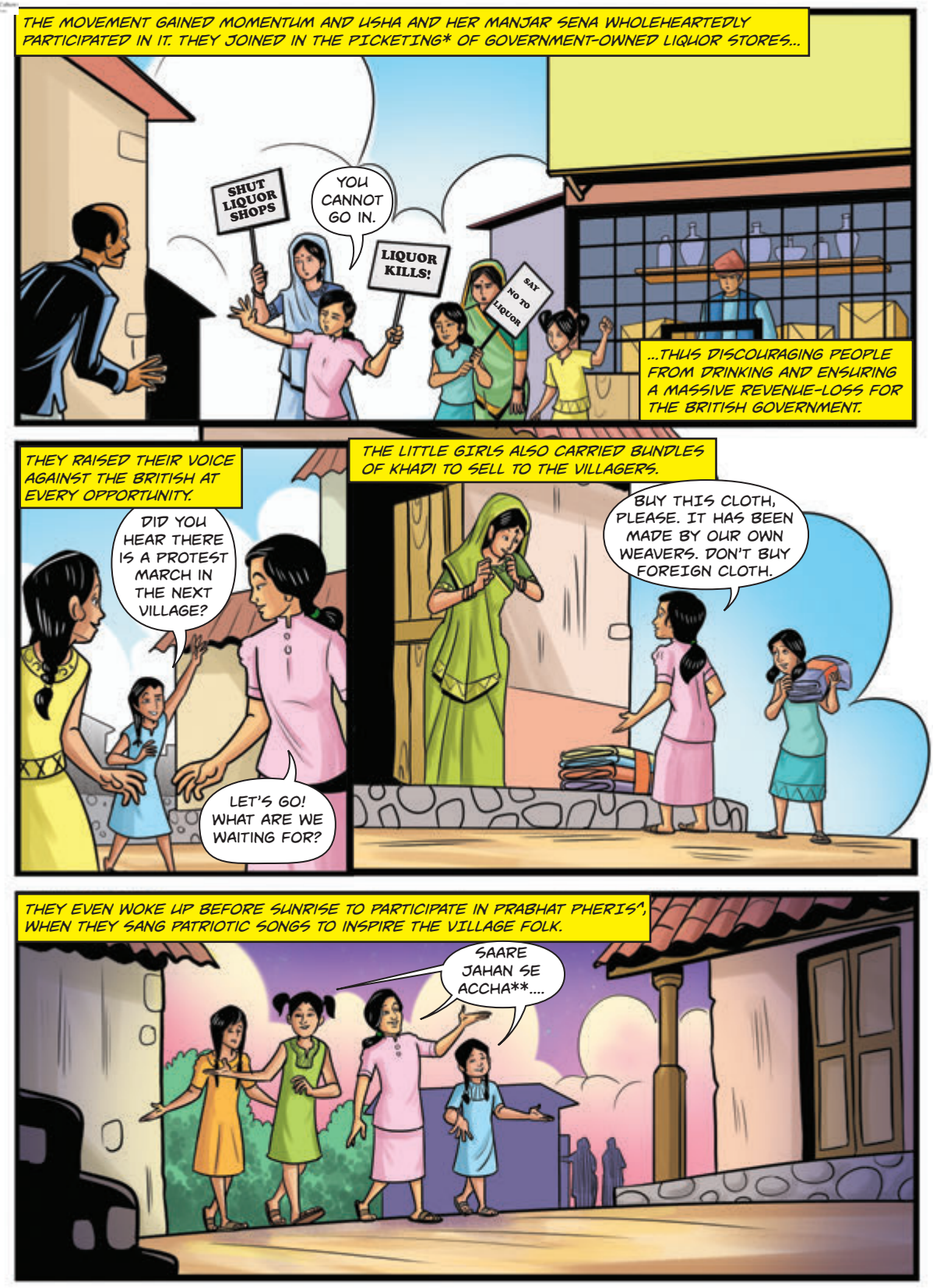

ON 25 MARCH, 1920, IN A VILLAGE CALLED SARAS IN GUJARAT, A LITTLE GIRL WAS BORN TO JITESH MEHTA AND HIS WIFE. THEY NAMED HER USHA.
WHEN USHA WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, SHE ACCOMPANIED HER PARENTS TO SABARMATI ASHRAM.
THAT IS BAPU! THE MAN LEADING INDIA AGAINST THE BRITISH.
HE LOOKS SO KIND!
LITTLE DID USHA KNOW THAT MAHATMA GANDHI, THE MAN SHE HAD JUST GOT A GLIMPSE OF, WOULD ONE DAY BECOME THE GUIDING FORCE OF HER LIFE.
SOME MONTHS LATER —
BAPU IS ORGANISING A CAMP NEAR OUR VILLAGE. WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?
OF COURSE!
USHA, ENTHUSIASTICALLY, PARTICIPATED IN THE CAMP'S ACTIVITIES.
THIS IS TOUGH BUT ALSO FUN!



*A GROUP APPOINTED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO STUDY AND SUGGEST CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS IN INDIA.

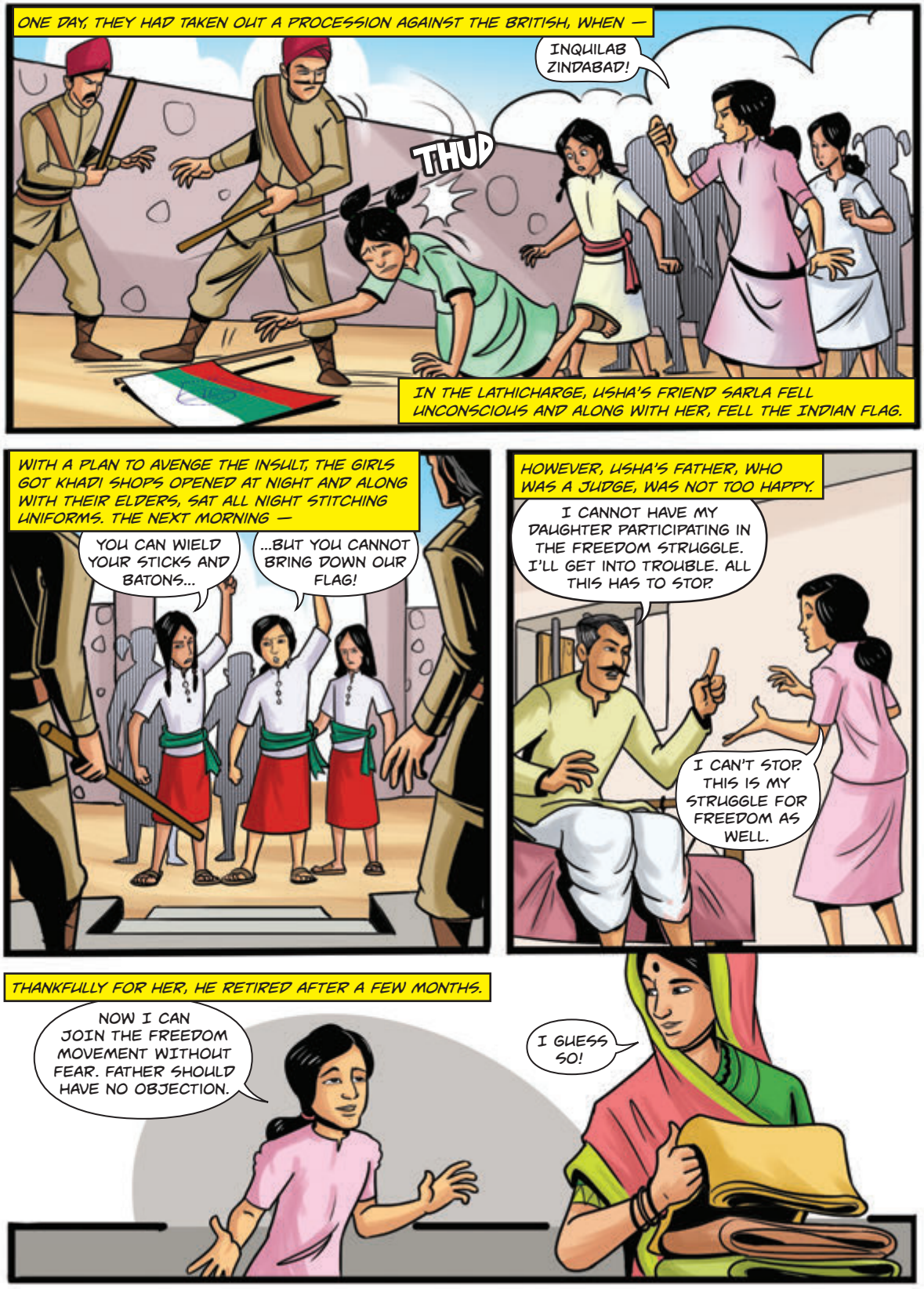
^MANJAR SENA TRANSLATES TO CAT ARMY, VANAR SENA TRANSLATES TO MONKEY ARMY.

**THE SALT ACT PROHIBITED INDIANS FROM COLLECTING AND SELLING SALT.

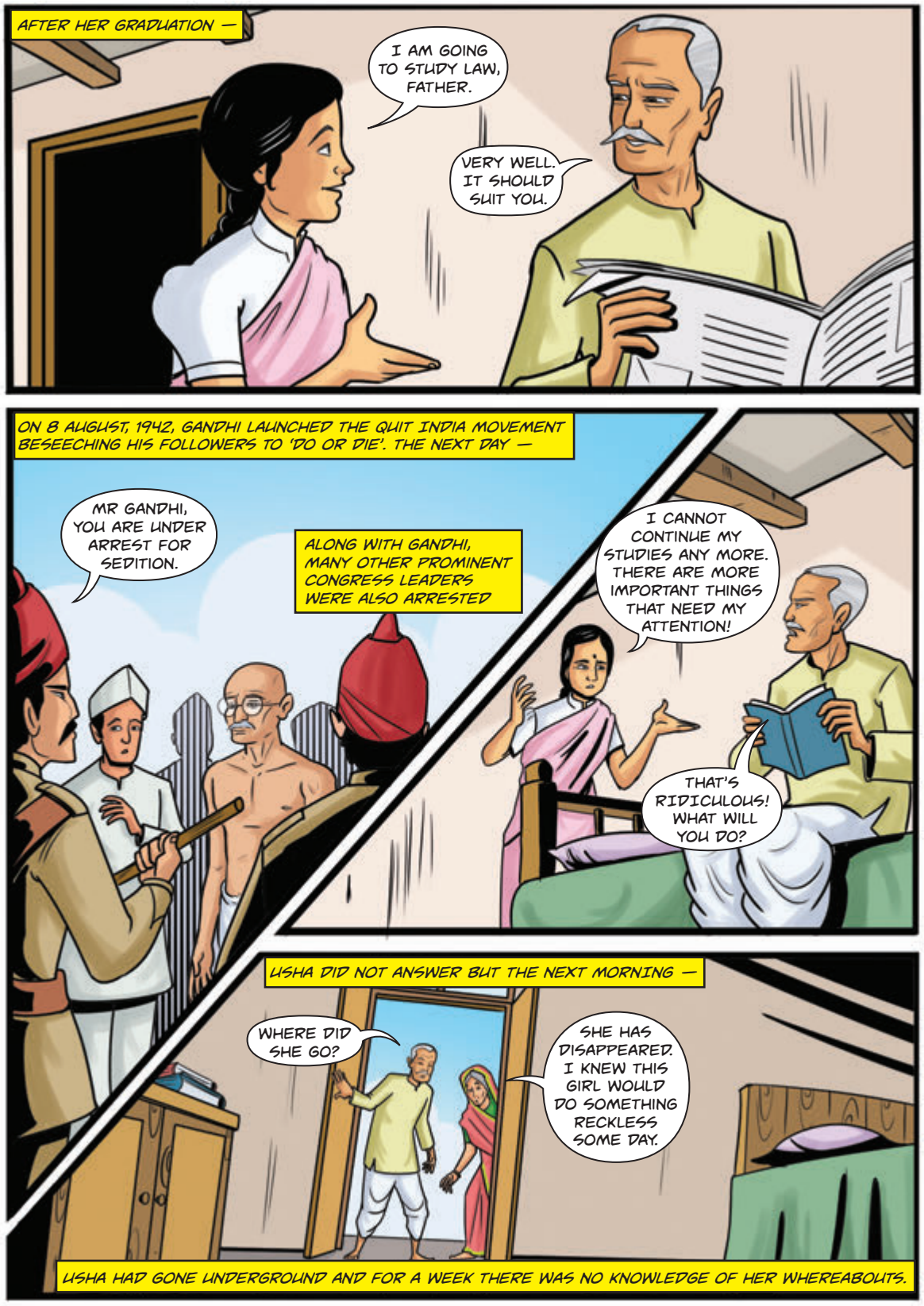


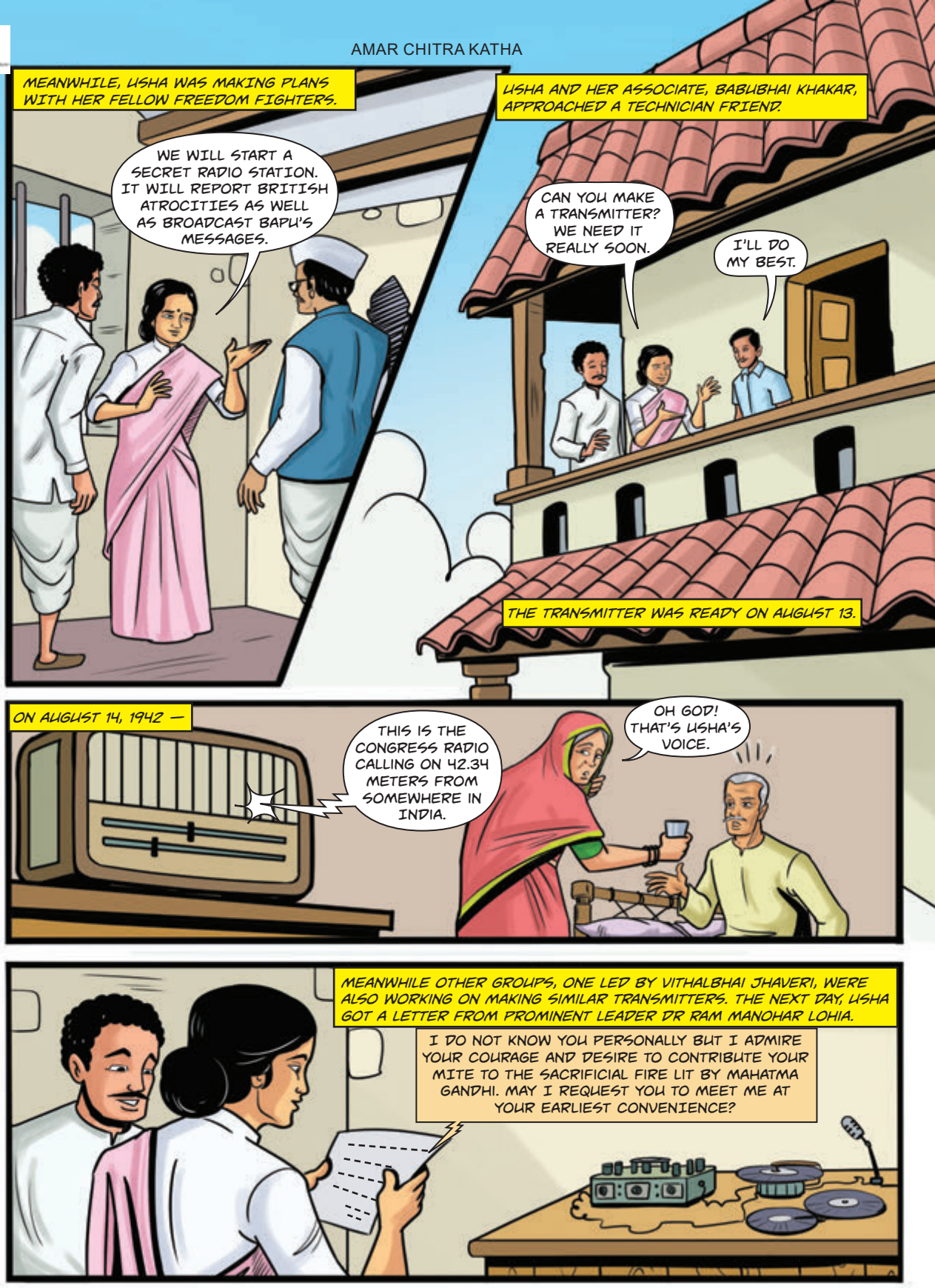
*PICKETING IS A FORM OF PROTEST DONE OUTSIDE A LOCATION TO DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM ENTERING. ^SMALL GROUPS OF PEOPLE WHO WALKED THROUGH THE STREETS AT DAWN, SINGING PATRIOTIC SONGS

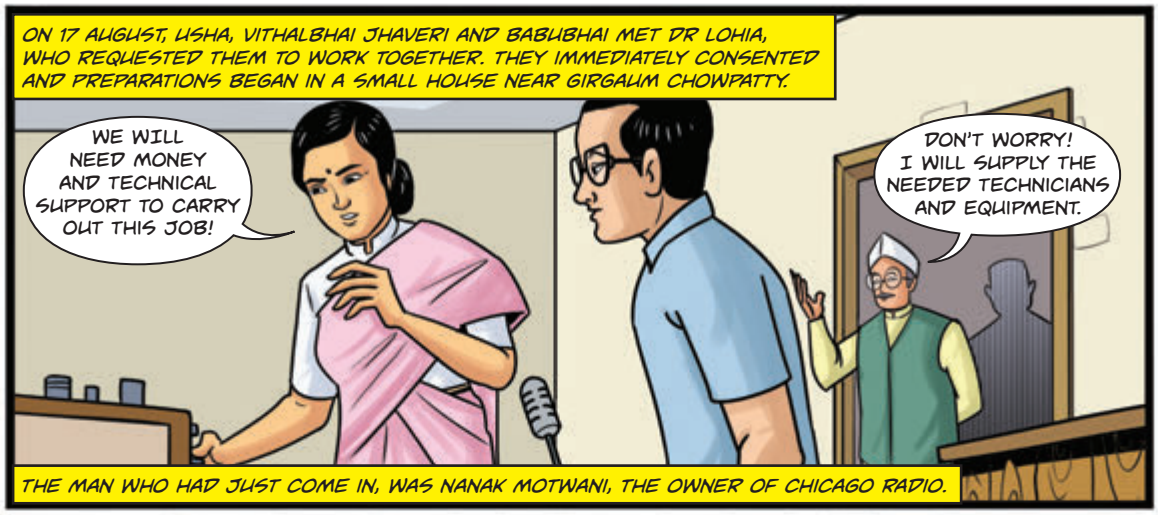
**A PATRIOTIC SONG WRITTEN BY THE POET, MUHAMMAD IQBAL.

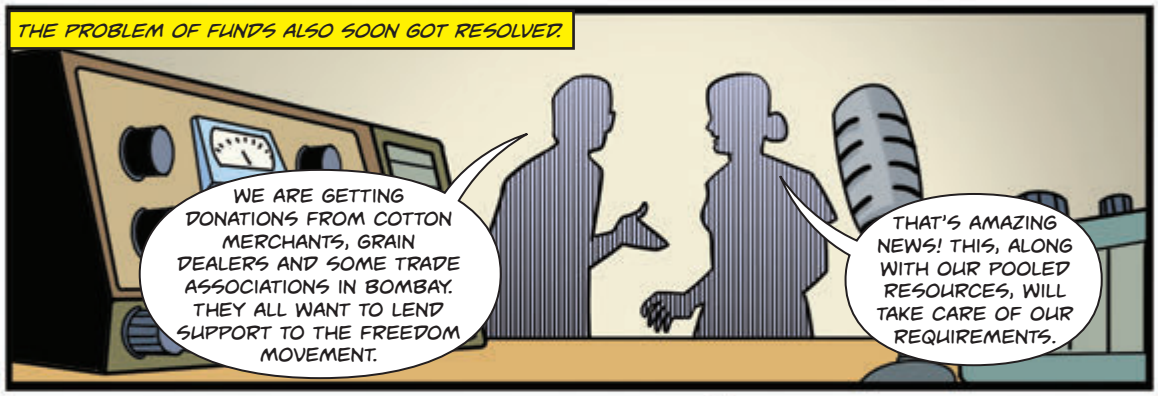

ONE DAY, THEY HAD TAKEN OUT A PROCESSION AGAINST THE BRITISH, WHEN —
INQUILAB ZINDABAD!
THUD
IN THE LATHICHARGE, USHA'S FRIEND SARLA FELL UNCONSCIOUS AND ALONG WITH HER, FELL THE INDIAN FLAG.
WITH A PLAN TO AVENGE THE INSULT, THE GIRLS GOT KHADI SHOPS OPENED AT NIGHT AND ALONG WITH THEIR ELDERS, SAT ALL NIGHT STITCHING UNIFORMS. THE NEXT MORNING —
YOU CAN WIELD YOUR STICKS AND BATONS...
...BUT YOU CANNOT BRING DOWN OUR FLAG!
HOWEVER, USHA'S FATHER, WHO WAS A JUDGE, WAS NOT TOO HAPPY.
I CANNOT HAVE MY DAUGHTER PARTICIPATING IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE. I'LL GET INTO TROUBLE. ALL THIS HAS TO STOP.
I CAN'T STOP. THIS IS MY STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM AS WELL.
THANKFULLY FOR HER, HE RETIRED AFTER A FEW MONTHS.
NOW I CAN JOIN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT WITHOUT FEAR. FATHER SHOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION.
I GUESS SO!

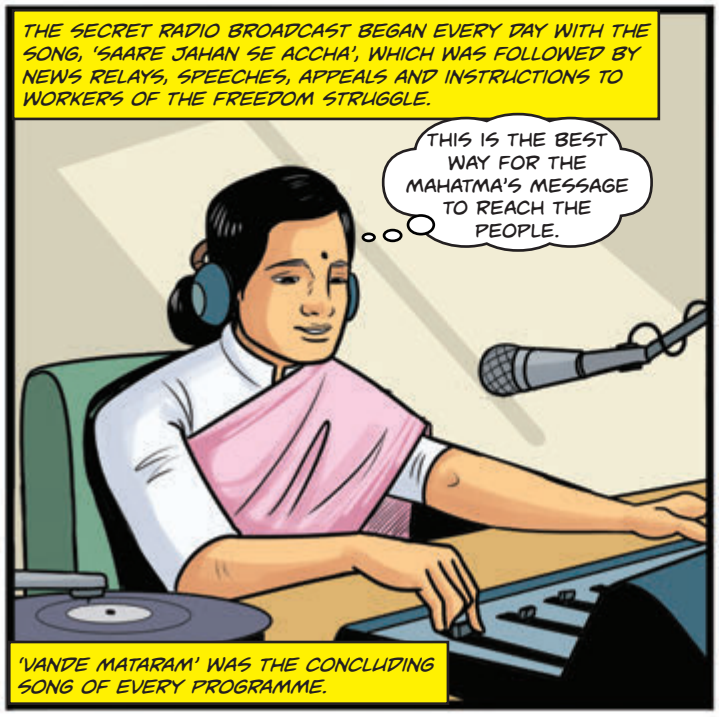
TWO YEARS LATER —
WE ARE MOVING TO BOMBAY.
THAT'S WONDERFUL!
IT IS THE CENTRE OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
USHA, WHO HAD COMPLETED HER PRIMARY EDUCATION IN GUJARAT, NOW JOINED THE CHANDARAMJI HIGH SCHOOL IN BOMBAY. AFTER SCHOOL, SHE OFTEN WENT TO MEET HER FREEDOM FIGHTER RELATIVES IN JAIL...
QUICK, UNCLE, TAKE THIS LETTER!
...AND CARRIED SECRET MESSAGES TO THEM.
AT THE AGE OF 12, SHE GOT BUSY DISTRIBUTING BULLETINS AND EVEN MAKING SALT, ILLEGALLY, AT CHOWPATTY BEACH.
TAKE THIS PACKET OF SALT. PAY WHAT YOU CAN.
IN 1935, SHE COMPLETED HER MATRICULATION AND WAS AMONG THE TOP 25 IN HER CLASS. SHE CONTINUED HER EDUCATION IN WILSON COLLEGE AND SOON —
USHA MEHTA HAS GRADUATED WITH A FIRST CLASS IN PHILOSOPHY.

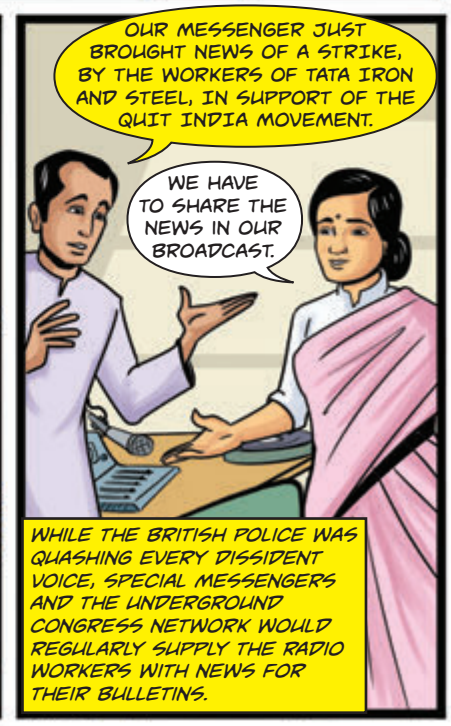

AFTER HER GRADUATION —
I AM GOING TO STUDY LAW, FATHER.
VERY WELL. IT SHOULD SUIT YOU.
ON 8 AUGUST, 1942, GANDHI LAUNCHED THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT BESEECHING HIS FOLLOWERS TO 'DO OR DIE'. THE NEXT DAY —
MR GANDHI, YOU ARE UNDER ARREST FOR SEDITION.
ALONG WITH GANDHI, MANY OTHER PROMINENT CONGRESS LEADERS WERE ALSO ARRESTED
I CANNOT CONTINUE MY STUDIES ANY MORE. THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS THAT NEED MY ATTENTION!
THAT'S RIDICULOUS! WHAT WILL YOU DO?
USHA DID NOT ANSWER BUT THE NEXT MORNING —
WHERE DID SHE GO?
SHE HAS DISAPPEARED. I KNEW THIS GIRL WOULD DO SOMETHING RECKLESS SOME DAY.
USHA HAD GONE UNDERGROUND AND FOR A WEEK THERE WAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF HER WHEREABOUTS.

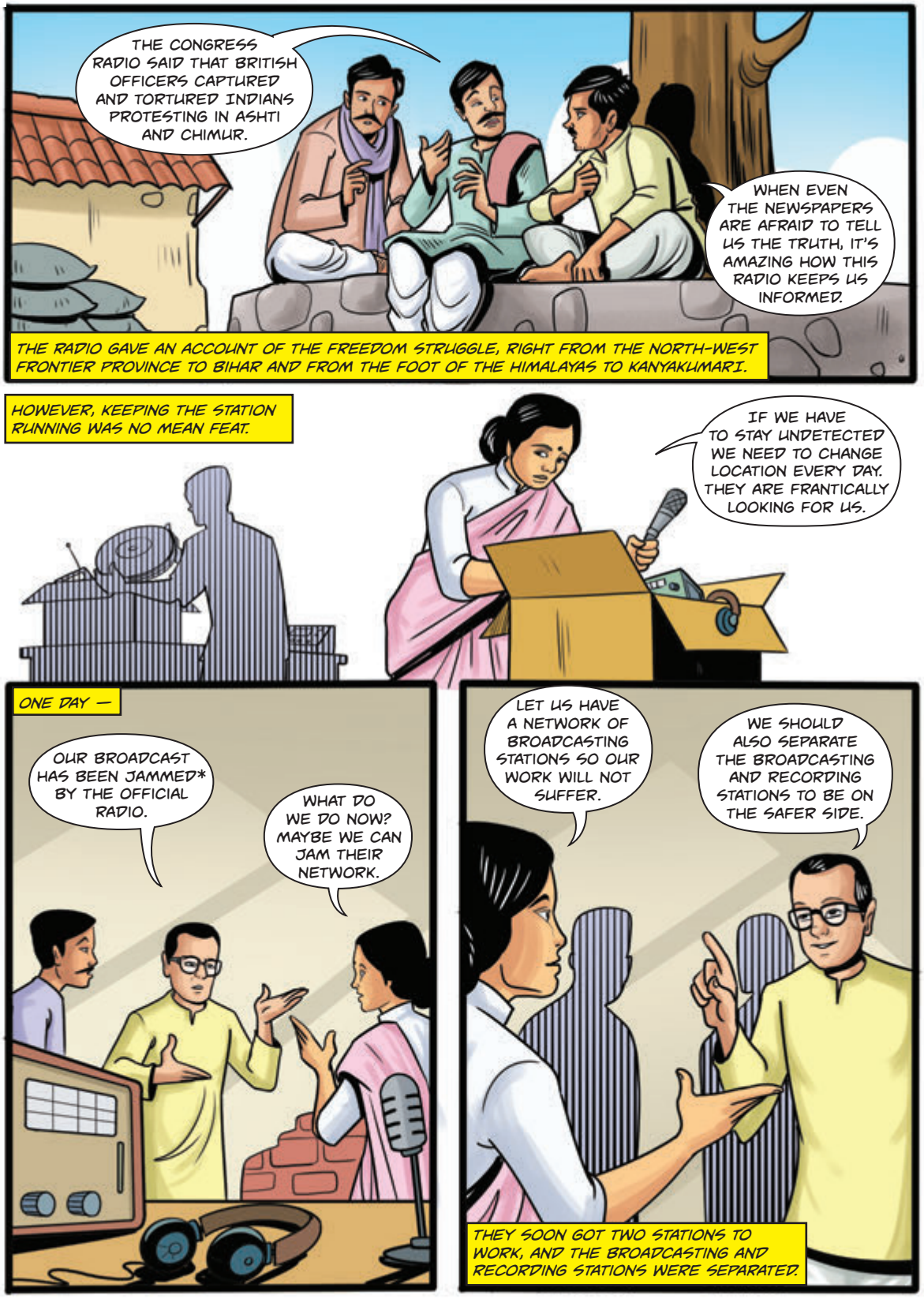

MEANWHILE, USHA WAS MAKING PLANS WITH HER FELLOW FREEDOM FIGHTERS.
WE WILL START A SECRET RADIO STATION. IT WILL REPORT BRITISH ATROCITIES AS WELL AS BROADCAST BAPU'S MESSAGES.
USHA AND HER ASSOCIATE, BABUBHAI KHAKAR, APPROACHED A TECHNICIAN FRIEND.
CAN YOU MAKE A TRANSMITTER? WE NEED IT REALLY SOON.
I'LL DO MY BEST.
THE TRANSMITTER WAS READY ON AUGUST 13.
ON AUGUST 14, 1942 —
THIS IS THE CONGRESS RADIO CALLING ON 42.34 METERS FROM SOMEWHERE IN INDIA.
OH GOD! THAT'S USHA'S VOICE.
MEANWHILE OTHER GROUPS, ONE LED BY VITHALBHAI JHAVERI, WERE ALSO WORKING ON MAKING SIMILAR TRANSMITTERS. THE NEXT DAY, USHA GOT A LETTER FROM PROMINENT LEADER DR RAM MANOHAR LOHIA.
I DO NOT KNOW YOU PERSONALLY BUT I ADMIRE YOUR COURAGE AND DESIRE TO CONTRIBUTE YOUR MITE TO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE LIT BY MAHATMA GANDHI. MAY I REQUEST YOU TO MEET ME AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE?


ON 17 AUGUST, USHA, VITHALBHAI JHAVERI AND BABUBHAI MET DR LOHIA, WHO REQUESTED THEM TO WORK TOGETHER. THEY IMMEDIATELY CONSENTED AND PREPARATIONS BEGAN IN A SMALL HOUSE NEAR GIRGAUM CHOWPATTY.
WE WILL NEED MONEY AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO CARRY OUT THIS JOB!
DON'T WORRY! I WILL SUPPLY THE NEEDED TECHNICIANS AND EQUIPMENT.
THE MAN WHO HAD JUST COME IN, WAS NANAK MOTWANI, THE OWNER OF CHICAGO RADIO.

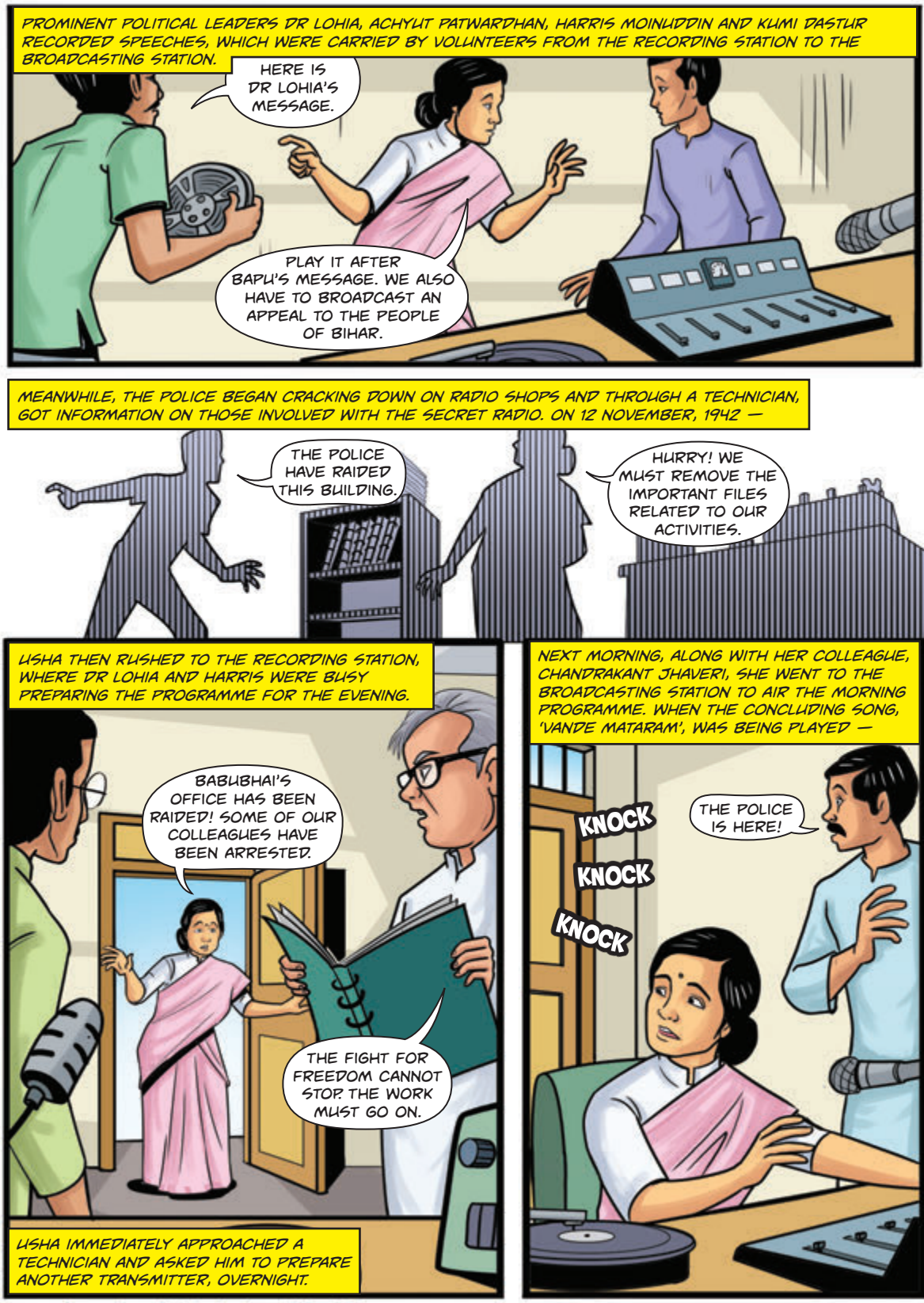

THE PROBLEM OF FUNDS ALSO SOON GOT RESOLVED.
WE ARE GETTING DONATIONS FROM COTTON MERCHANTS, GRAIN DEALERS AND SOME TRADE ASSOCIATIONS IN BOMBAY. THEY ALL WANT TO LEND SUPPORT TO THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT.
THAT'S AMAZING NEWS! THIS, ALONG WITH OUR POOLED RESOURCES, WILL TAKE CARE OF OUR REQUIREMENTS.

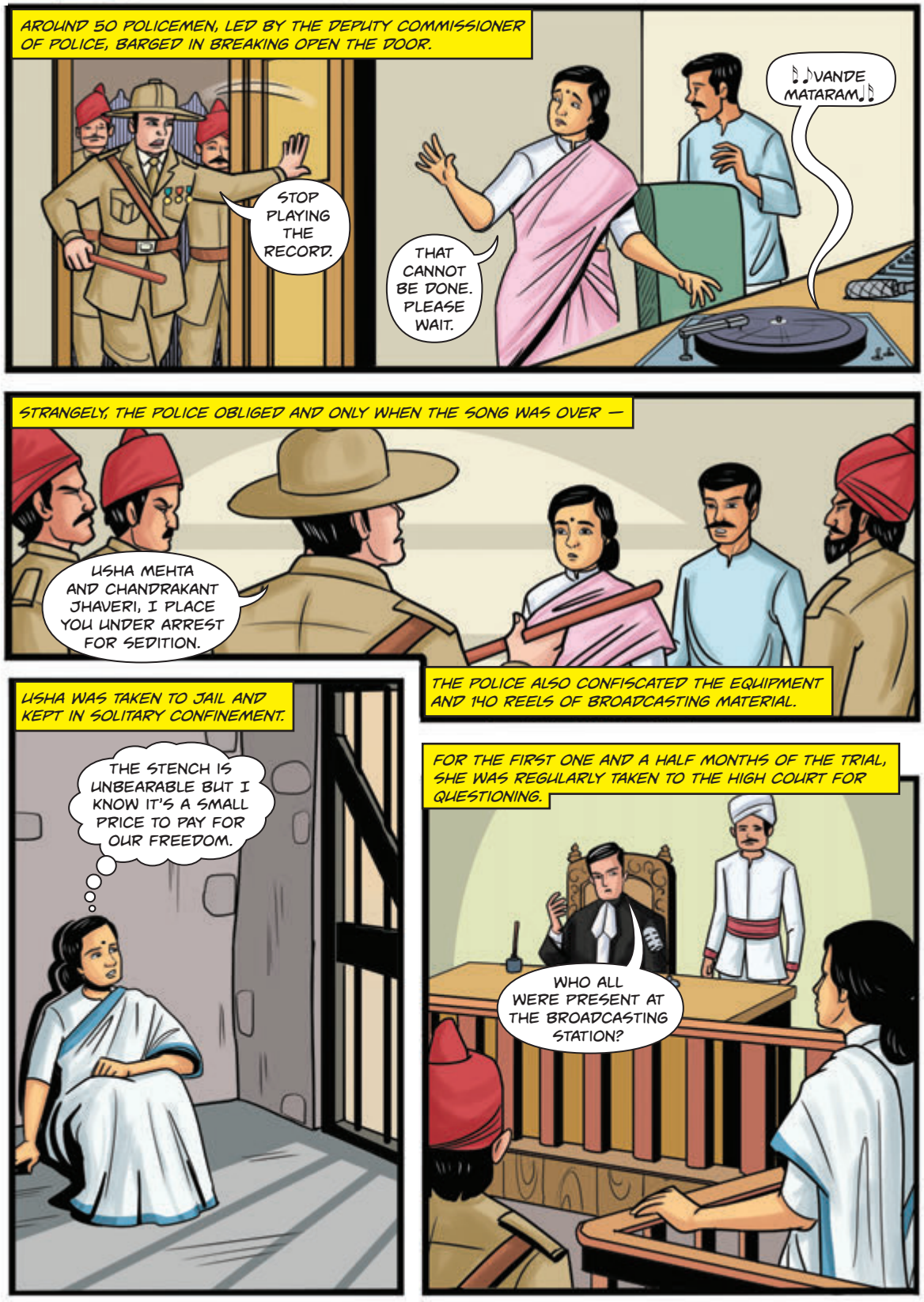

THE SECRET RADIO BROADCAST BEGAN EVERY DAY WITH THE SONG, 'SAARE JAHAN SE ACCHA', WHICH WAS FOLLOWED BY NEWS RELAYS, SPEECHES, APPEALS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO WORKERS OF THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
THIS IS THE BEST WAY FOR THE MAHATMA'S MESSAGE TO REACH THE PEOPLE.
'VANDE MATARAM' WAS THE CONCLUDING SONG OF EVERY PROGRAMME.

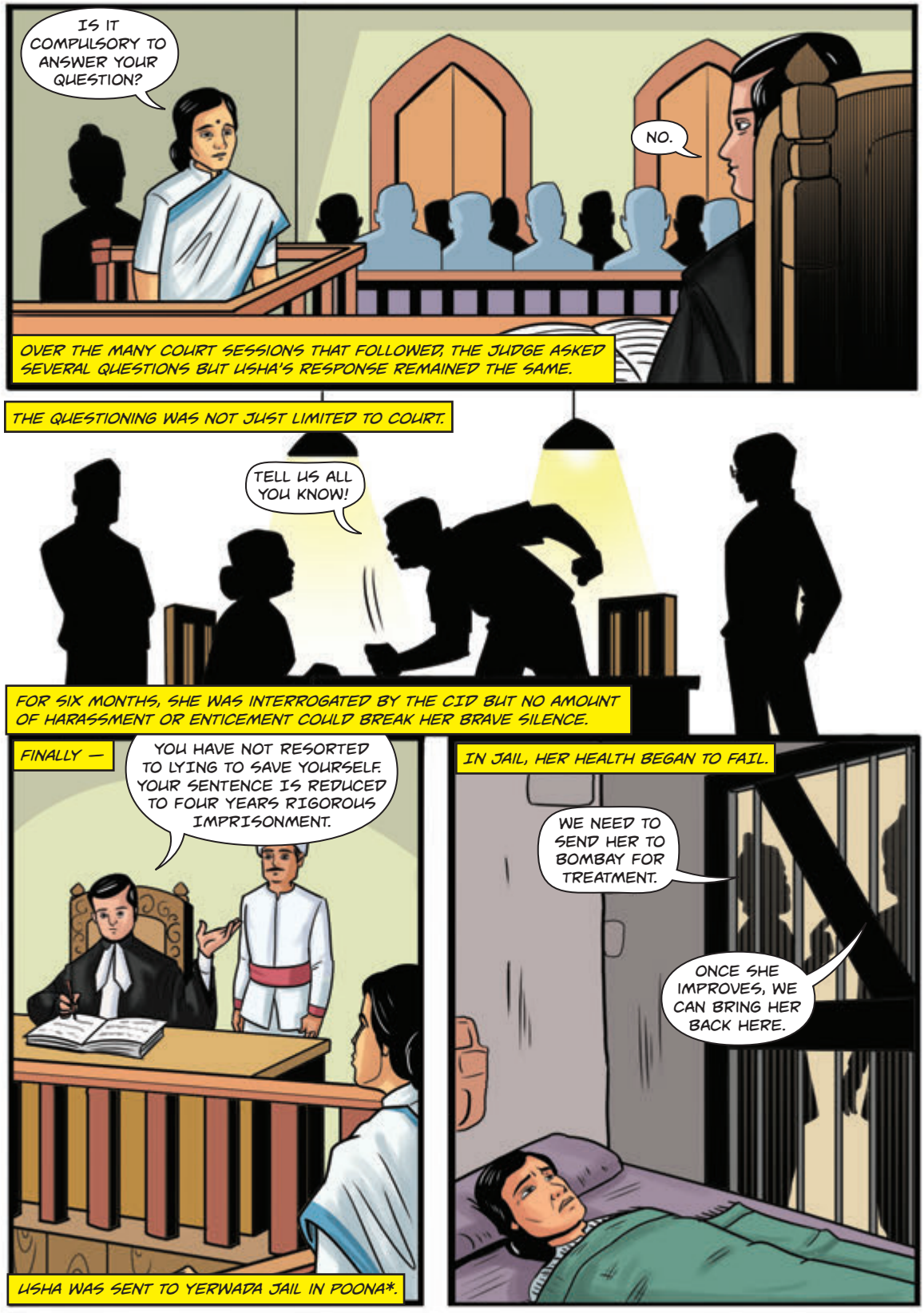

OUR MESSENGER JUST BROUGHT NEWS OF A STRIKE, BY THE WORKERS OF TATA IRON AND STEEL, IN SUPPORT OF THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT.
WE HAVE TO SHARE THE NEWS IN OUR BROADCAST.
WHILE THE BRITISH POLICE WAS QUASHING EVERY DISSIDENT VOICE, SPECIAL MESSENGERS AND THE UNDERGROUND CONGRESS NETWORK WOULD REGULARLY SUPPLY THE RADIO WORKERS WITH NEWS FOR THEIR BULLETINS.



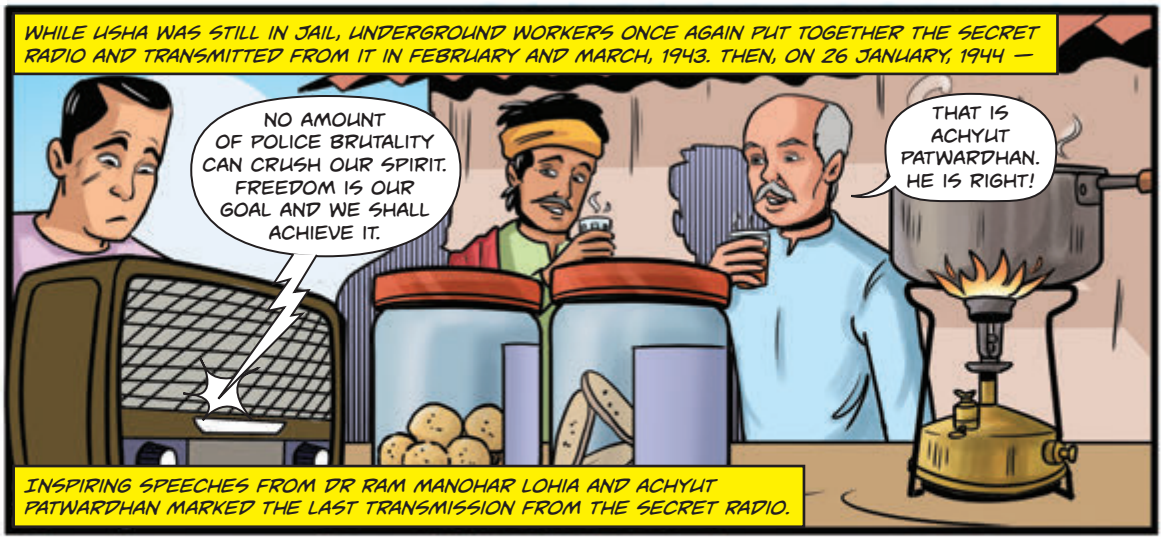
*BLOCKING RADIO SIGNALS BY INTERFERING WITH RADIO COMMUNICATIONS


PROMINENT POLITICAL LEADERS DR LOHIA, ACHYUT PATWARDHAN, HARRIS MOINUDDIN AND KUMI DASTUR RECORDED SPEECHES, WHICH WERE CARRIED BY VOLUNTEERS FROM THE RECORDING STATION TO THE BROADCASTING STATION.
HERE IS DR LOHIA'S MESSAGE.
PLAY IT AFTER BAPU'S MESSAGE. WE ALSO HAVE TO BROADCAST AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE OF BIHAR.
MEANWHILE, THE POLICE BEGAN CRACKING DOWN ON RADIO SHOPS AND THROUGH A TECHNICIAN, GOT INFORMATION ON THOSE INVOLVED WITH THE SECRET RADIO. ON 12 NOVEMBER, 1942 —
THE POLICE HAVE RAIDED THIS BUILDING.
HURRY! WE MUST REMOVE THE IMPORTANT FILES RELATED TO OUR ACTIVITIES.
USHA THEN RUSHED TO THE RECORDING STATION, WHERE DR LOHIA AND HARRIS WERE BUSY PREPARING THE PROGRAMME FOR THE EVENING.
BABUBHAI'S OFFICE HAS BEEN RAIDED! SOME OF OUR COLLEAGUES HAVE BEEN ARRESTED.
THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM CANNOT STOP. THE WORK MUST GO ON.
USHA IMMEDIATELY APPROACHED A TECHNICIAN AND ASKED HIM TO PREPARE ANOTHER TRANSMITTER, OVERNIGHT.
NEXT MORNING, ALONG WITH HER COLLEAGUE, CHANDRAKANT JHAVERI, SHE WENT TO THE BROADCASTING STATION TO AIR THE MORNING PROGRAMME. WHEN THE CONCLUDING SONG, 'VANDE MATARAM', WAS BEING PLAYED —
KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
THE POLICE IS HERE!

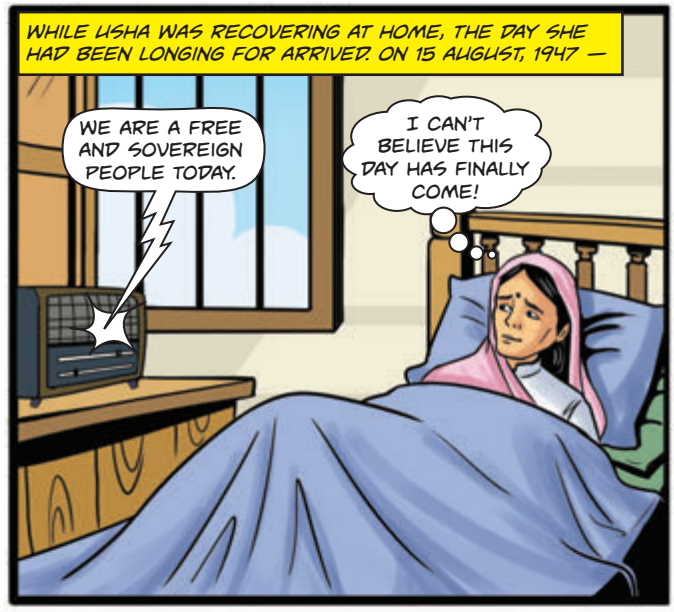

AROUND 50 POLICEMEN, LED BY THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, BARGED IN BREAKING OPEN THE DOOR.
STOP PLAYING THE RECORD.
THAT CANNOT BE DONE. PLEASE WAIT.
♪♪VANDE MATARAM♪♪
STRANGELY, THE POLICE OBLIGED AND ONLY WHEN THE SONG WAS OVER —
USHA MEHTA AND CHANDRAKANT JHAVERI, I PLACE YOU UNDER ARREST FOR SEDITION.
THE POLICE ALSO CONFISCATED THE EQUIPMENT AND 140 REELS OF BROADCASTING MATERIAL.
USHA WAS TAKEN TO JAIL AND KEPT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT.
THE STENCH IS UNBEARABLE BUT I KNOW IT'S A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR OUR FREEDOM.
FOR THE FIRST ONE AND A HALF MONTHS OF THE TRIAL, SHE WAS REGULARLY TAKEN TO THE HIGH COURT FOR QUESTIONING.
WHO ALL WERE PRESENT AT THE BROADCASTING STATION?

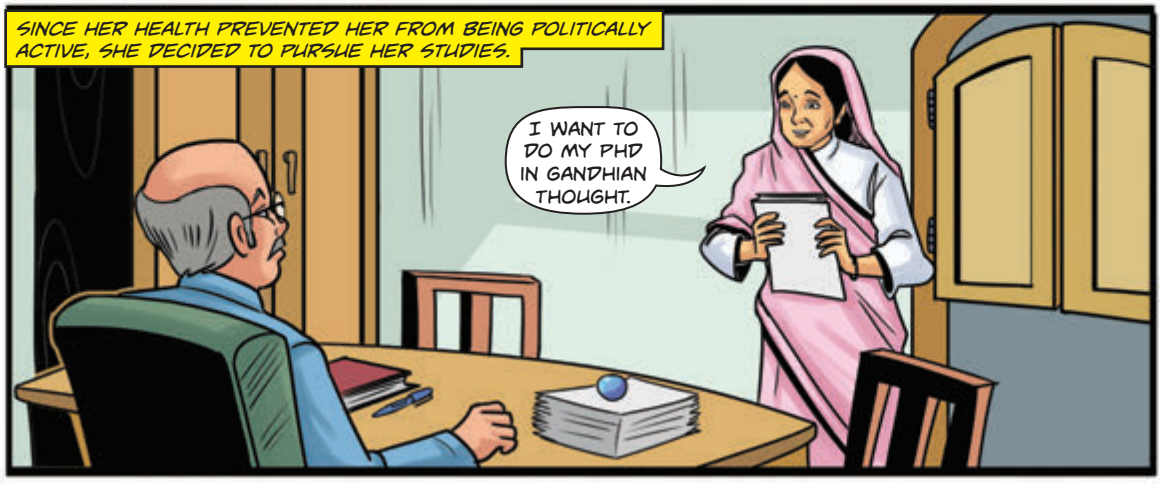


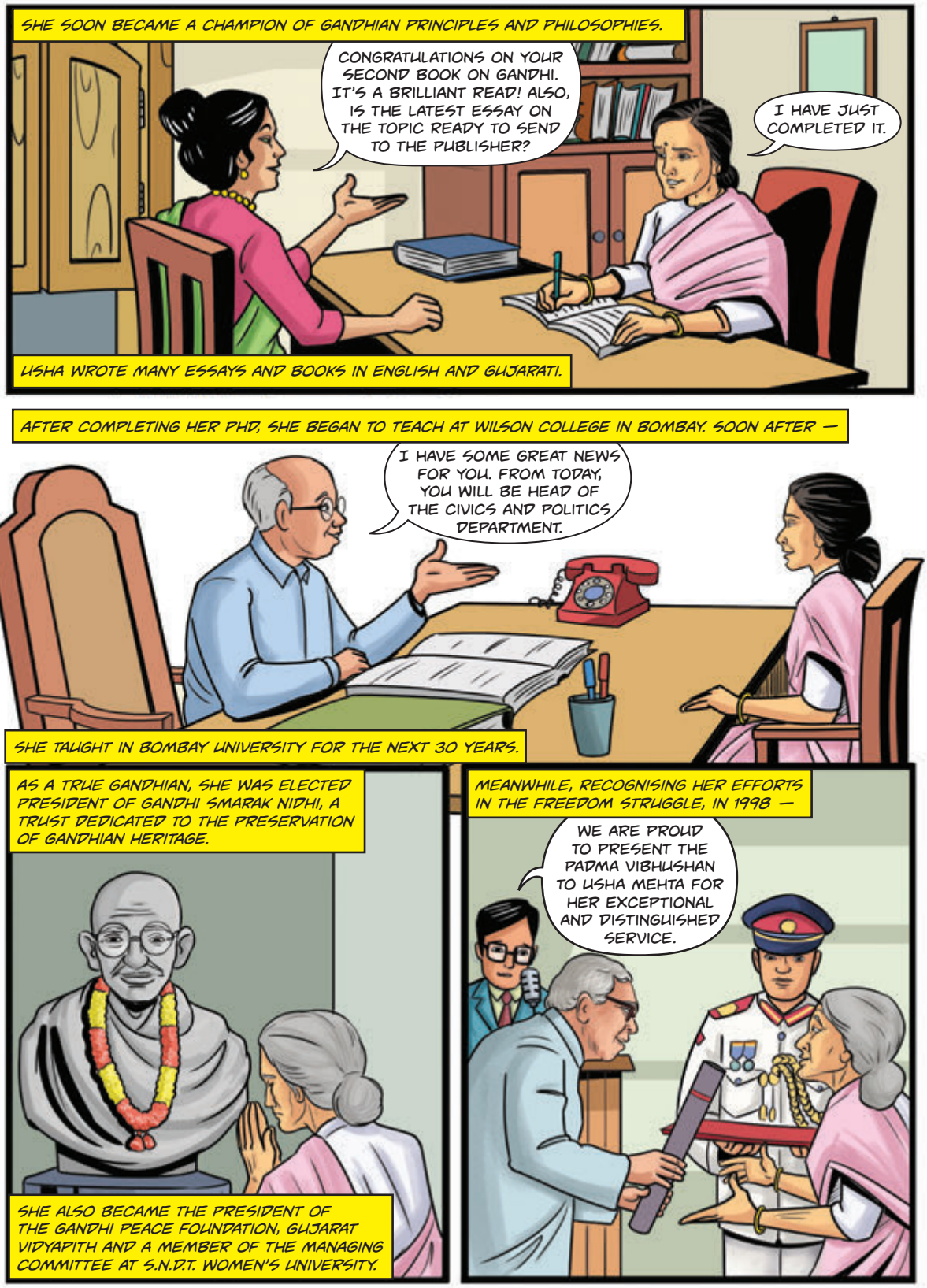
*NOW KNOWN AS PUNE

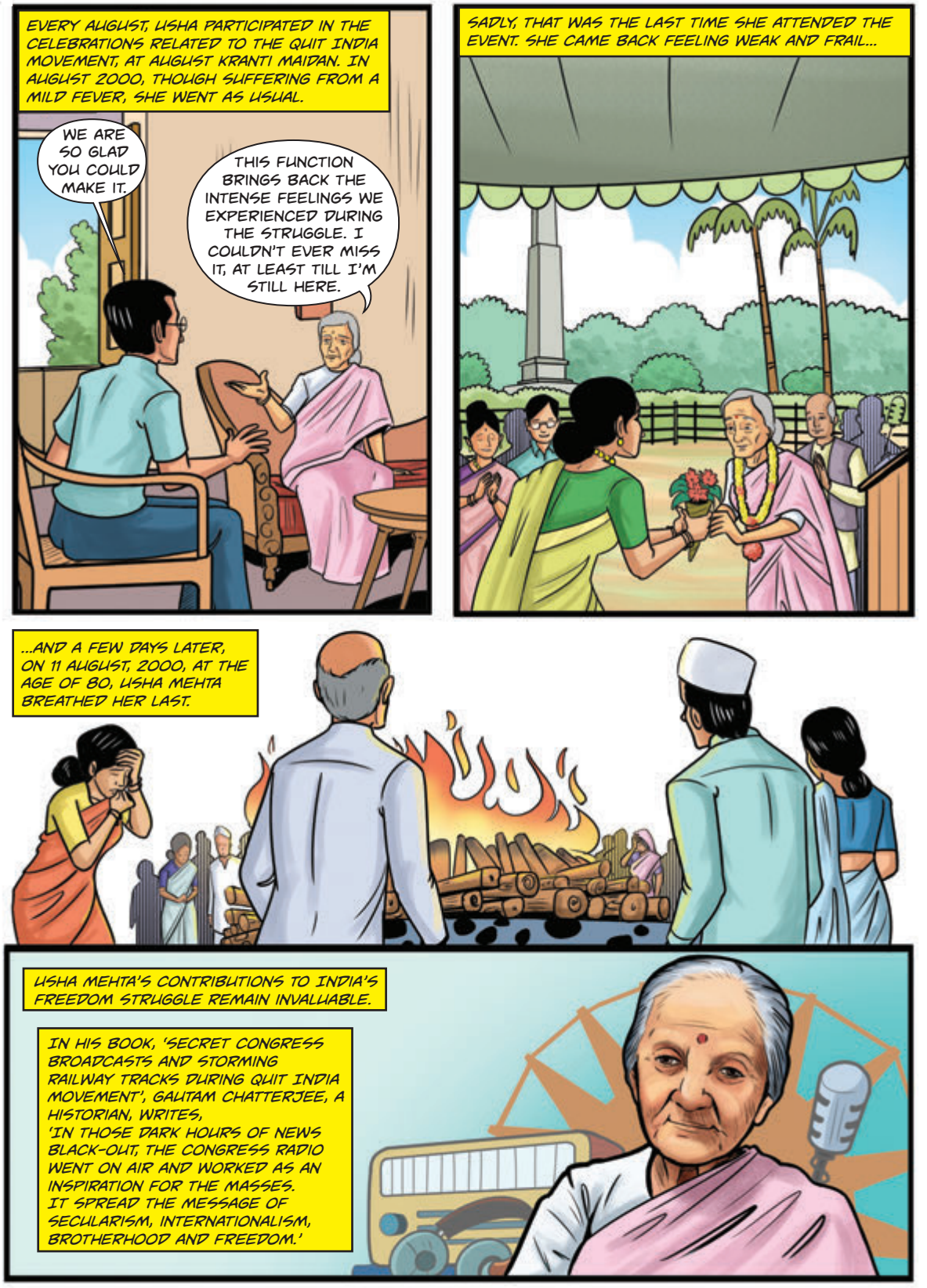

WHILE USHA WAS STILL IN JAIL, UNDERGROUND WORKERS ONCE AGAIN PUT TOGETHER THE SECRET RADIO AND TRANSMITTED FROM IT IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 1943. THEN, ON 26 JANUARY, 1944 —
NO AMOUNT OF POLICE BRUTALITY CAN CRUSH OUR SPIRIT. FREEDOM IS OUR GOAL AND WE SHALL ACHIEVE IT.
THAT IS ACHYUT PATWARDHAN. HE IS RIGHT!
INSPIRING SPEECHES FROM DR RAM MANOHAR LOHIA AND ACHYUT PATWARDHAN MARKED THE LAST TRANSMISSION FROM THE SECRET RADIO.

WITH FREEDOM NOW A REALITY FOR INDIA, THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IN BOMBAY GAVE ORDERS FOR USHA'S RELEASE FROM PRISON. IN APRIL, 1946 —
IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO GO HOME.

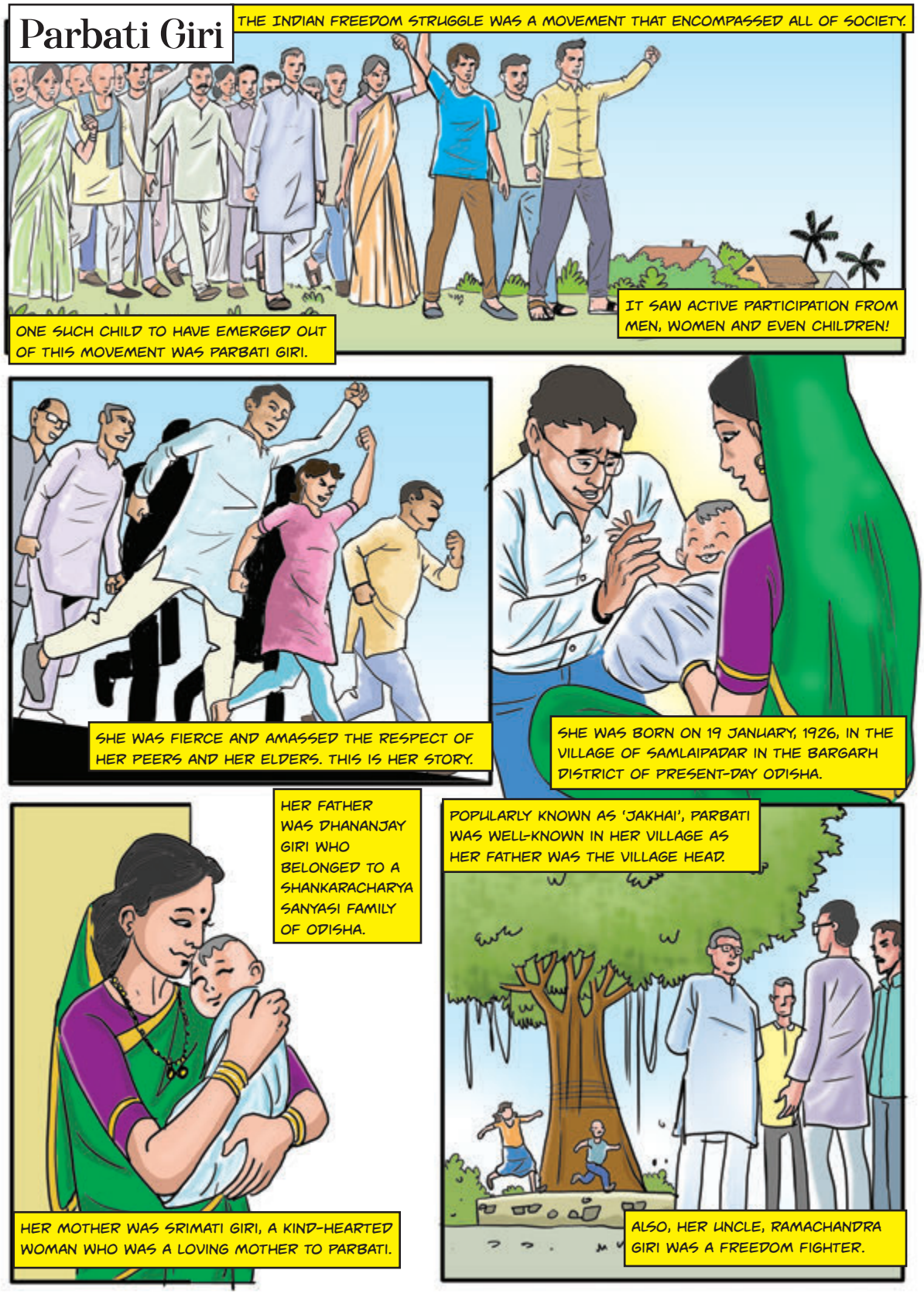

WHILE USHA WAS RECOVERING AT HOME, THE DAY SHE HAD BEEN LONGING FOR ARRIVED. ON 15 AUGUST, 1947 —
WE ARE A FREE AND SOVEREIGN PEOPLE TODAY.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS DAY HAS FINALLY COME!

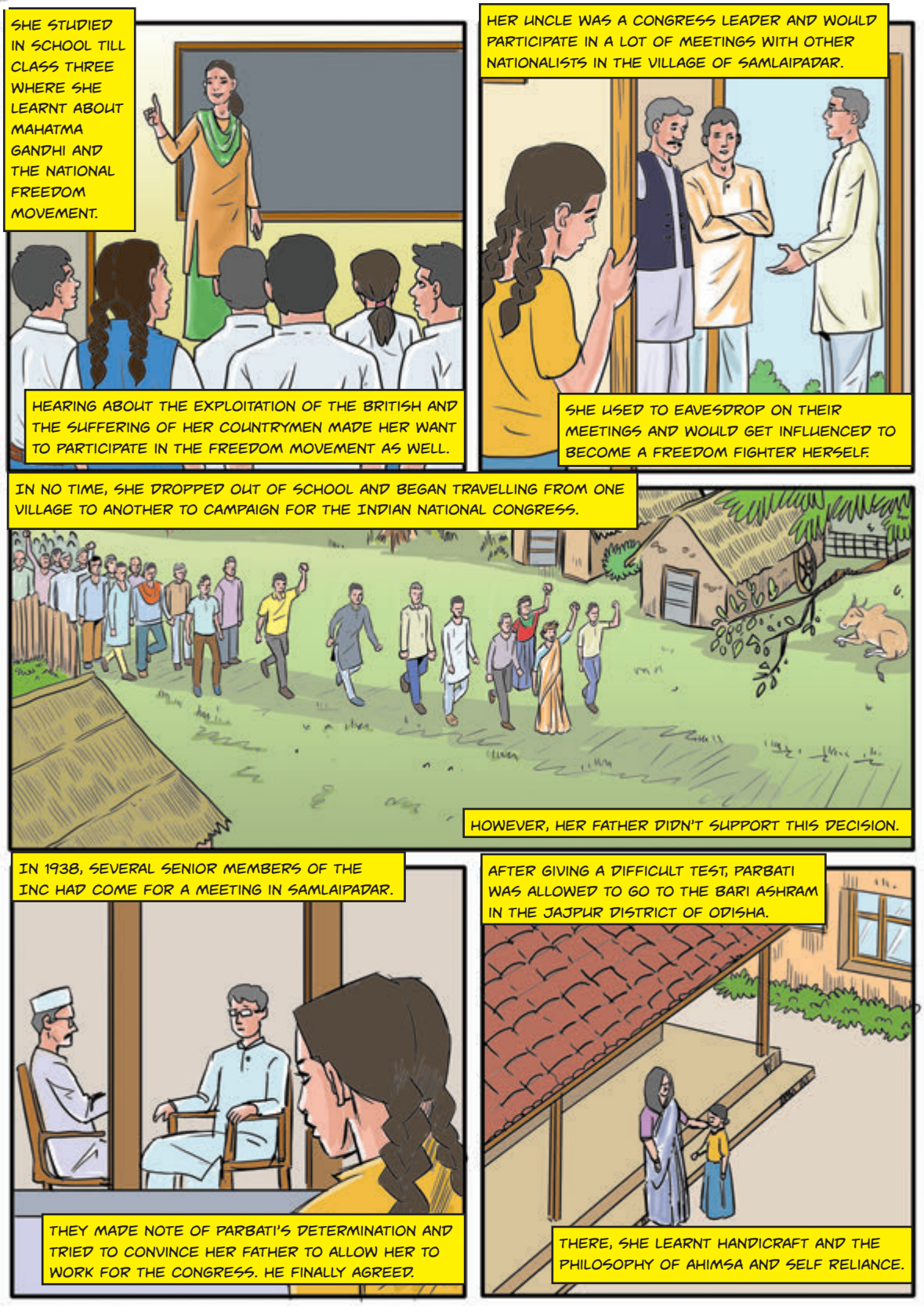

SINCE HER HEALTH PREVENTED HER FROM BEING POLITICALLY ACTIVE, SHE DECIDED TO PURSUE HER STUDIES.
I WANT TO DO MY PHD IN GANDHIAN THOUGHT.

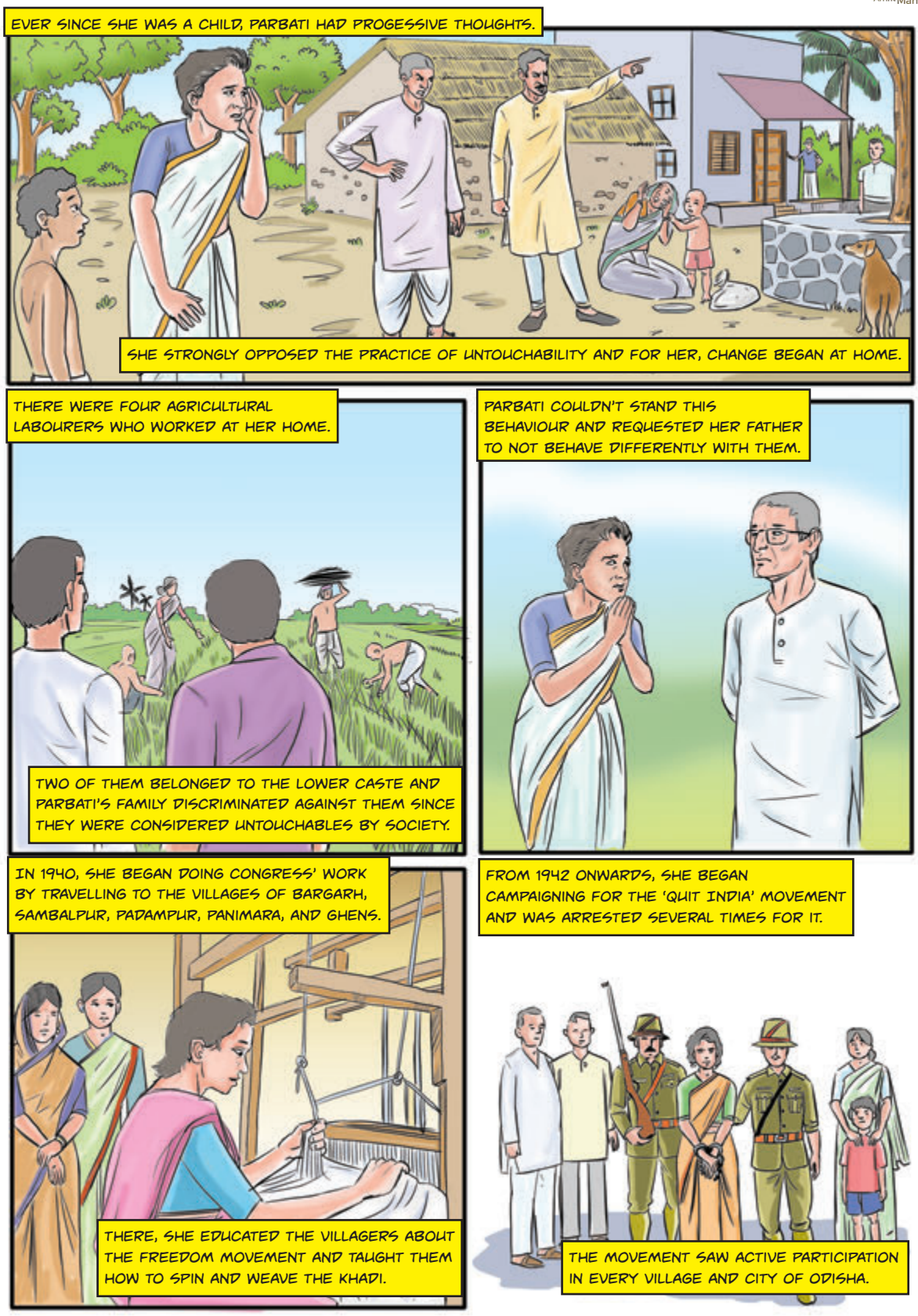

SHE SOON BECAME A CHAMPION OF GANDHIAN PRINCIPLES AND PHILOSOPHIES.
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SECOND BOOK ON GANDHI. IT'S A BRILLIANT READ! ALSO, IS THE LATEST ESSAY ON THE TOPIC READY TO SEND TO THE PUBLISHER?
I HAVE JUST COMPLETED IT.
USHA WROTE MANY ESSAYS AND BOOKS IN ENGLISH AND GUJARATI.
AFTER COMPLETING HER PHD, SHE BEGAN TO TEACH AT WILSON COLLEGE IN BOMBAY. SOON AFTER —
I HAVE SOME GREAT NEWS FOR YOU. FROM TODAY, YOU WILL BE HEAD OF THE CIVICS AND POLITICS DEPARTMENT.
SHE TAUGHT IN BOMBAY UNIVERSITY FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS.
AS A TRUE GANDHIAN, SHE WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI, A TRUST DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF GANDHIAN HERITAGE.
SHE ALSO BECAME THE PRESIDENT OF THE GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION, GUJARAT VIDYAPITH AND A MEMBER OF THE MANAGING COMMITTEE AT S.N.D.T. WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY.
MEANWHILE, RECOGNISING HER EFFORTS IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE, IN 1998 —
WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT THE PADMA VIBHUSHAN TO USHA MEHTA FOR HER EXCEPTIONAL AND DISTINGUISHED SERVICE.

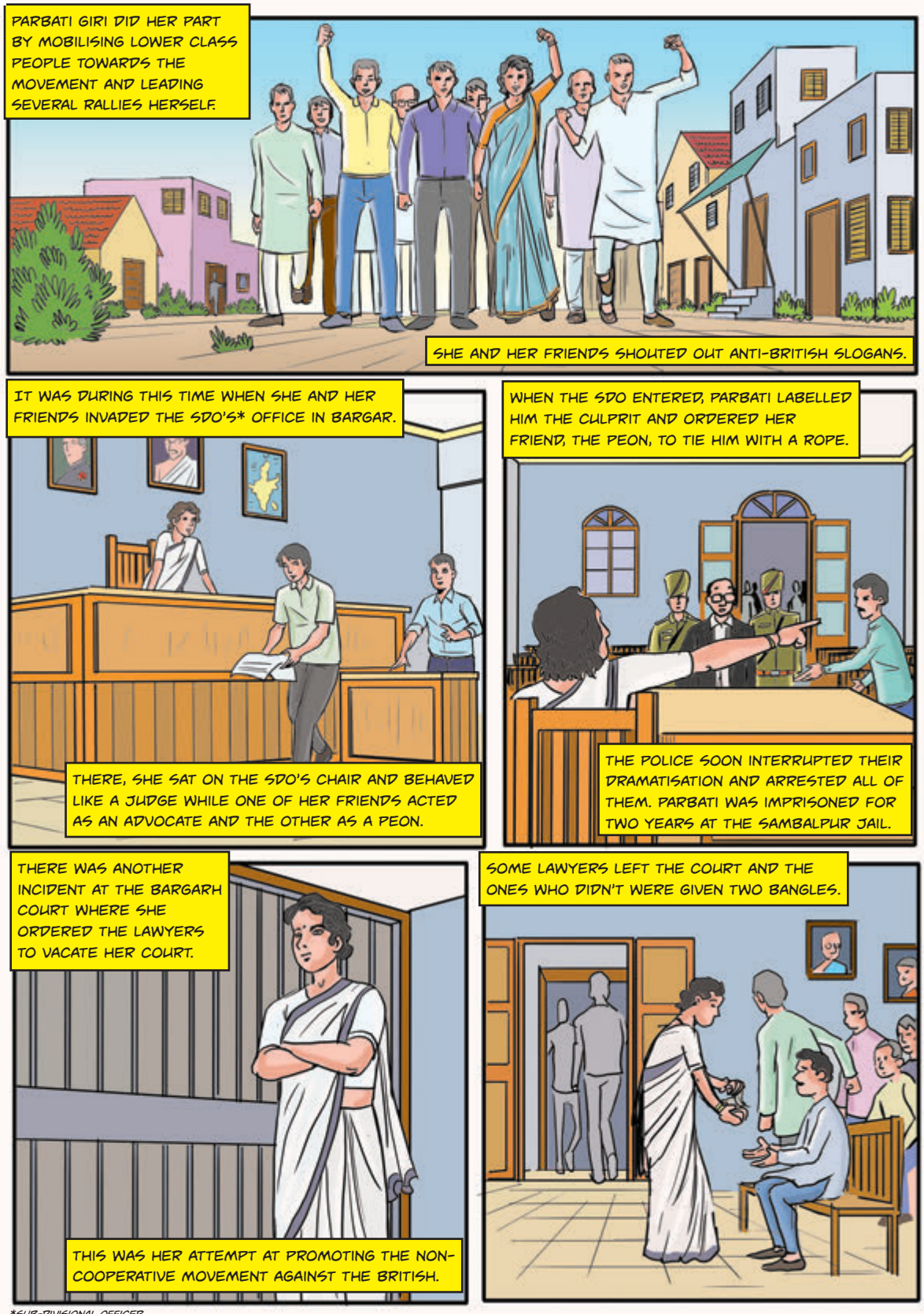

EVERY AUGUST, USHA PARTICIPATED IN THE CELEBRATIONS RELATED TO THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT, AT AUGUST KRANTI MAIDAN. IN AUGUST 2000, THOUGH SUFFERING FROM A MILD FEVER, SHE WENT AS USUAL.
WE ARE SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.
THIS FUNCTION BRINGS BACK THE INTENSE FEELINGS WE EXPERIENCED DURING THE STRUGGLE. I COULDN'T EVER MISS IT, AT LEAST TILL I'M STILL HERE.
SADLY, THAT WAS THE LAST TIME SHE ATTENDED THE EVENT. SHE CAME BACK FEELING WEAK AND FRAIL...
...AND A FEW DAYS LATER, ON 11 AUGUST, 2000, AT THE AGE OF 80, USHA MEHTA BREATHED HER LAST.
USHA MEHTA'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIA'S FREEDOM STRUGGLE REMAIN INVALUABLE.
IN HIS BOOK, 'SECRET CONGRESS BROADCASTS AND STORMING RAILWAY TRACKS DURING QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT', GAUTAM CHATTERJEE, A HISTORIAN, WRITES,
'IN THOSE DARK HOURS OF NEWS BLACK-OUT, THE CONGRESS RADIO WENT ON AIR AND WORKED AS AN INSPIRATION FOR THE MASSES. IT SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF SECULARISM, INTERNATIONALISM, BROTHERHOOD AND FREEDOM.'

Parbati Giri

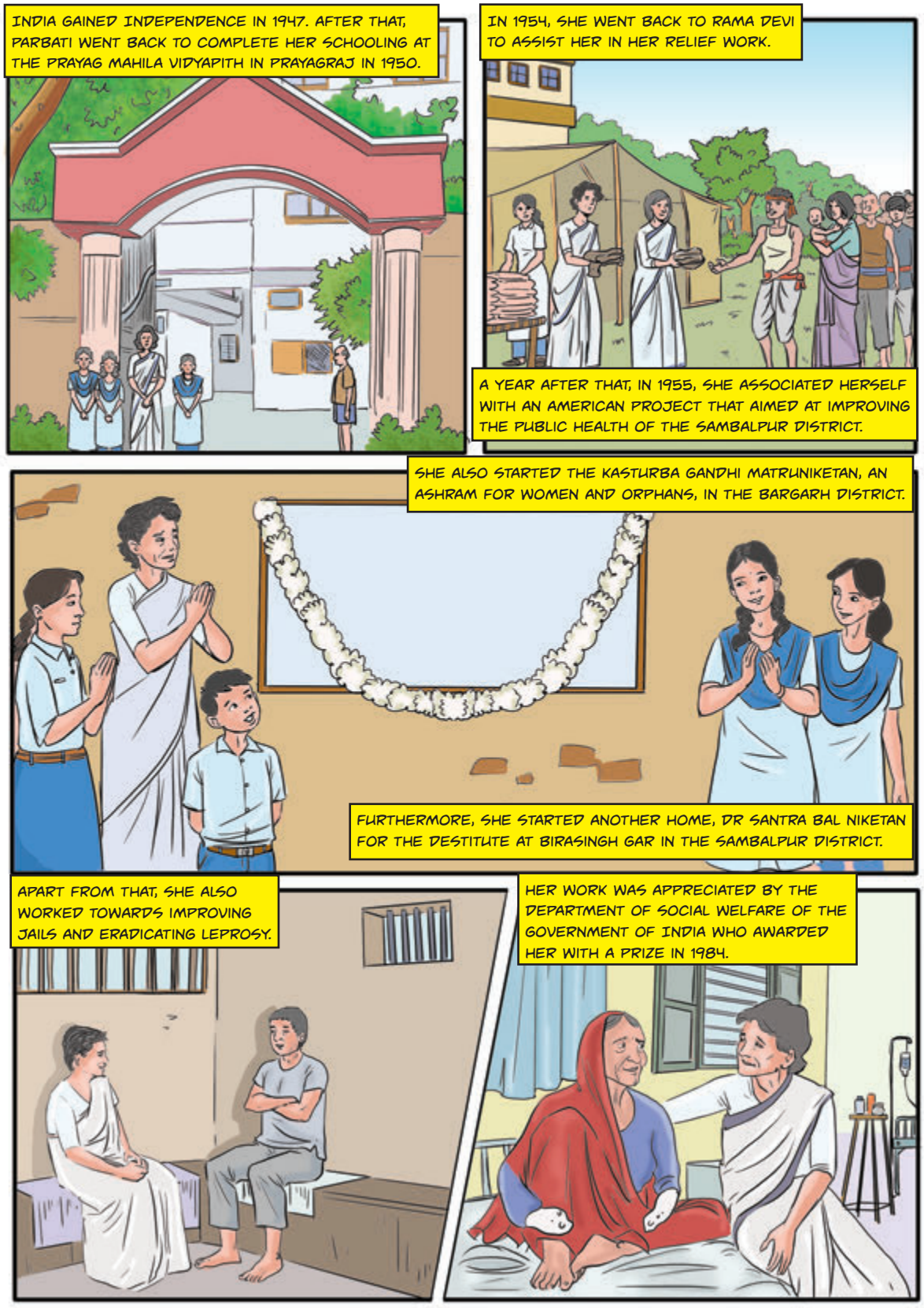


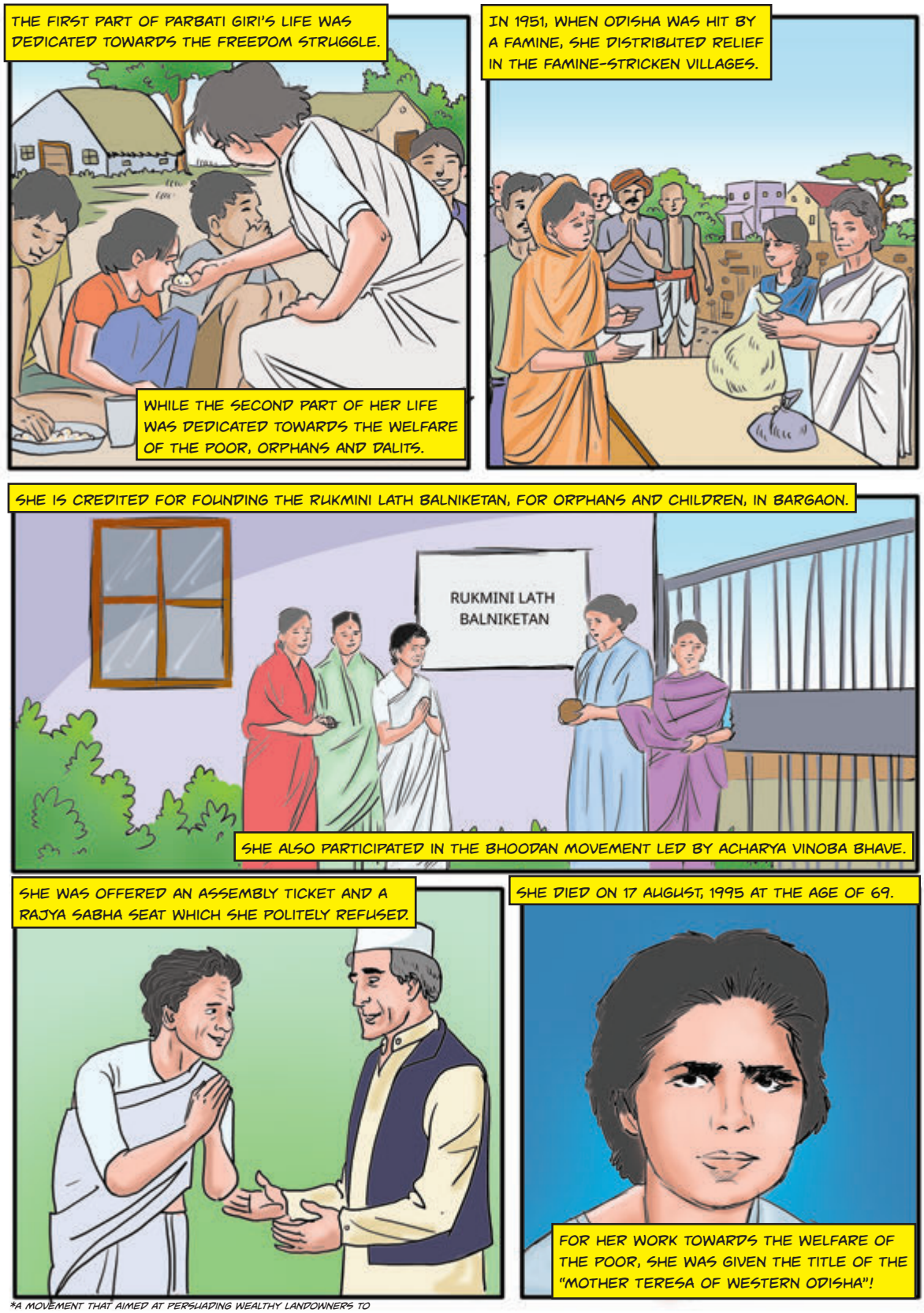

SHE STUDIED IN SCHOOL TILL CLASS THREE WHERE SHE LEARNT ABOUT MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE NATIONAL FREEDOM MOVEMENT.
HEARING ABOUT THE EXPLOITATION OF THE BRITISH AND THE SUFFERING OF HER COUNTRYMEN MADE HER WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT AS WELL.
HER UNCLE WAS A CONGRESS LEADER AND WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A LOT OF MEETINGS WITH OTHER NATIONALISTS IN THE VILLAGE OF SAMLAIPADAR.
SHE USED TO EAVESDROP ON THEIR MEETINGS AND WOULD GET INFLUENCED TO BECOME A FREEDOM FIGHTER HERSELF.
IN NO TIME, SHE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL AND BEGAN TRAVELLING FROM ONE VILLAGE TO ANOTHER TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.
HOWEVER, HER FATHER DIDN'T SUPPORT THIS DECISION.
IN 1938, SEVERAL SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE INC HAD COME FOR A MEETING IN SAMLAIPADAR.
THEY MADE NOTE OF PARBATI'S DETERMINATION AND TRIED TO CONVINCE HER FATHER TO ALLOW HER TO WORK FOR THE CONGRESS. HE FINALLY AGREED.
AFTER GIVING A DIFFICULT TEST, PARBATI WAS ALLOWED TO GO TO THE BARI ASHRAM IN THE JAJPUR DISTRICT OF ODISHA.
THERE, SHE LEARNT HANDICRAFT AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF AHIMSA AND SELF RELIANCE.


EVER SINCE SHE WAS A CHILD, PARBATI HAD PROGESSIVE THOUGHTS.
SHE STRONGLY OPPOSED THE PRACTICE OF UNTOUCHABILITY AND FOR HER, CHANGE BEGAN AT HOME.
THERE WERE FOUR AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS WHO WORKED AT HER HOME.
TWO OF THEM BELONGED TO THE LOWER CASTE AND PARBATI'S FAMILY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST THEM SINCE THEY WERE CONSIDERED UNTOUCHABLES BY SOCIETY.
PARBATI COULDN'T STAND THIS BEHAVIOUR AND REQUESTED HER FATHER TO NOT BEHAVE DIFFERENTLY WITH THEM.
IN 1940, SHE BEGAN DOING CONGRESS' WORK BY TRAVELLING TO THE VILLAGES OF BARGARH, SAMBALPUR, PADAMPUR, PANIMARA, AND GHENS.
THERE, SHE EDUCATED THE VILLAGERS ABOUT THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT AND TAUGHT THEM HOW TO SPIN AND WEAVE THE KHADI.
FROM 1942 ONWARDS, SHE BEGAN CAMPAIGNING FOR THE 'QUIT INDIA' MOVEMENT AND WAS ARRESTED SEVERAL TIMES FOR IT.
THE MOVEMENT SAW ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN EVERY VILLAGE AND CITY OF ODISHA.



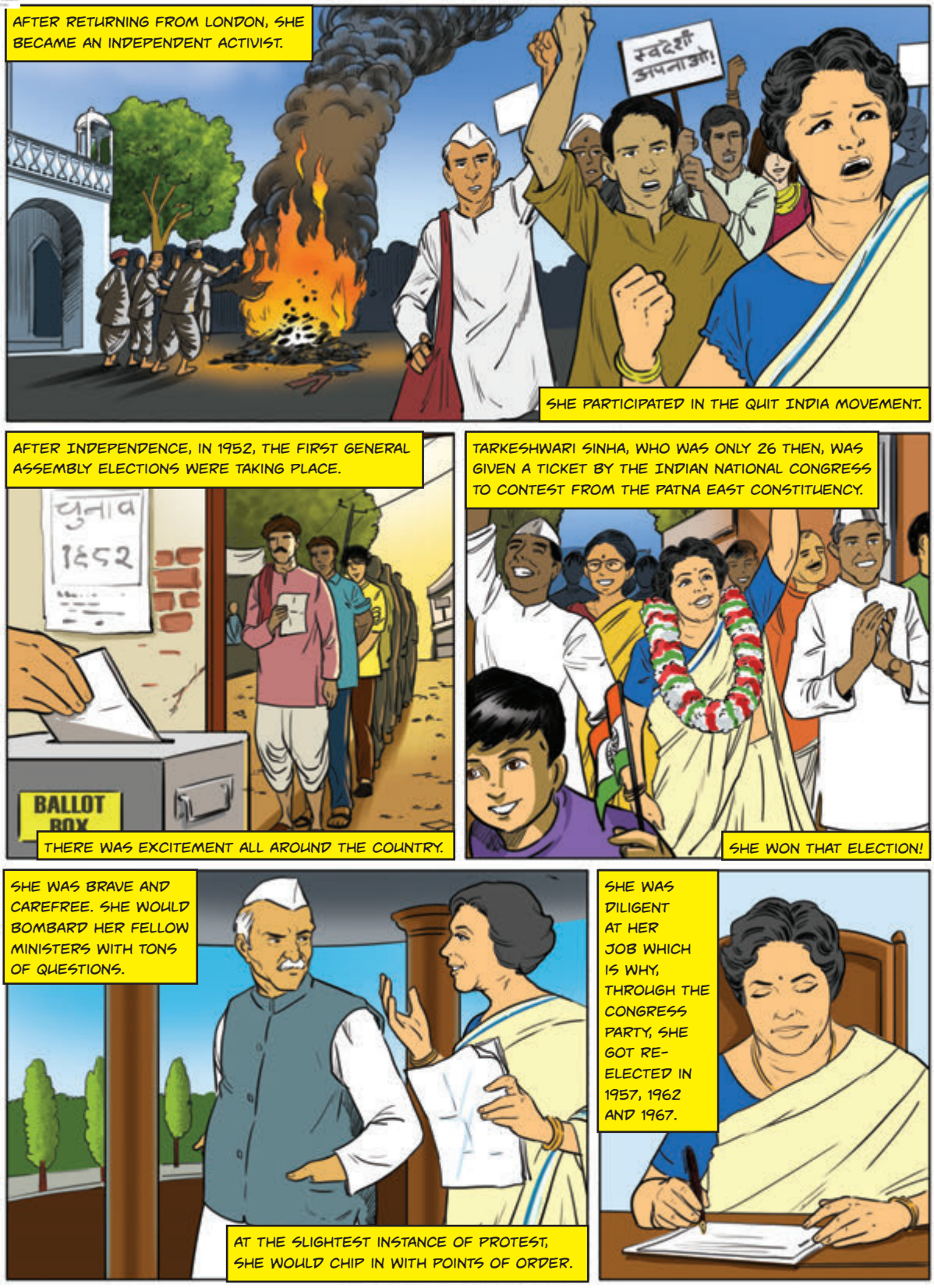
*SUB-DIVISIONAL OFFICER

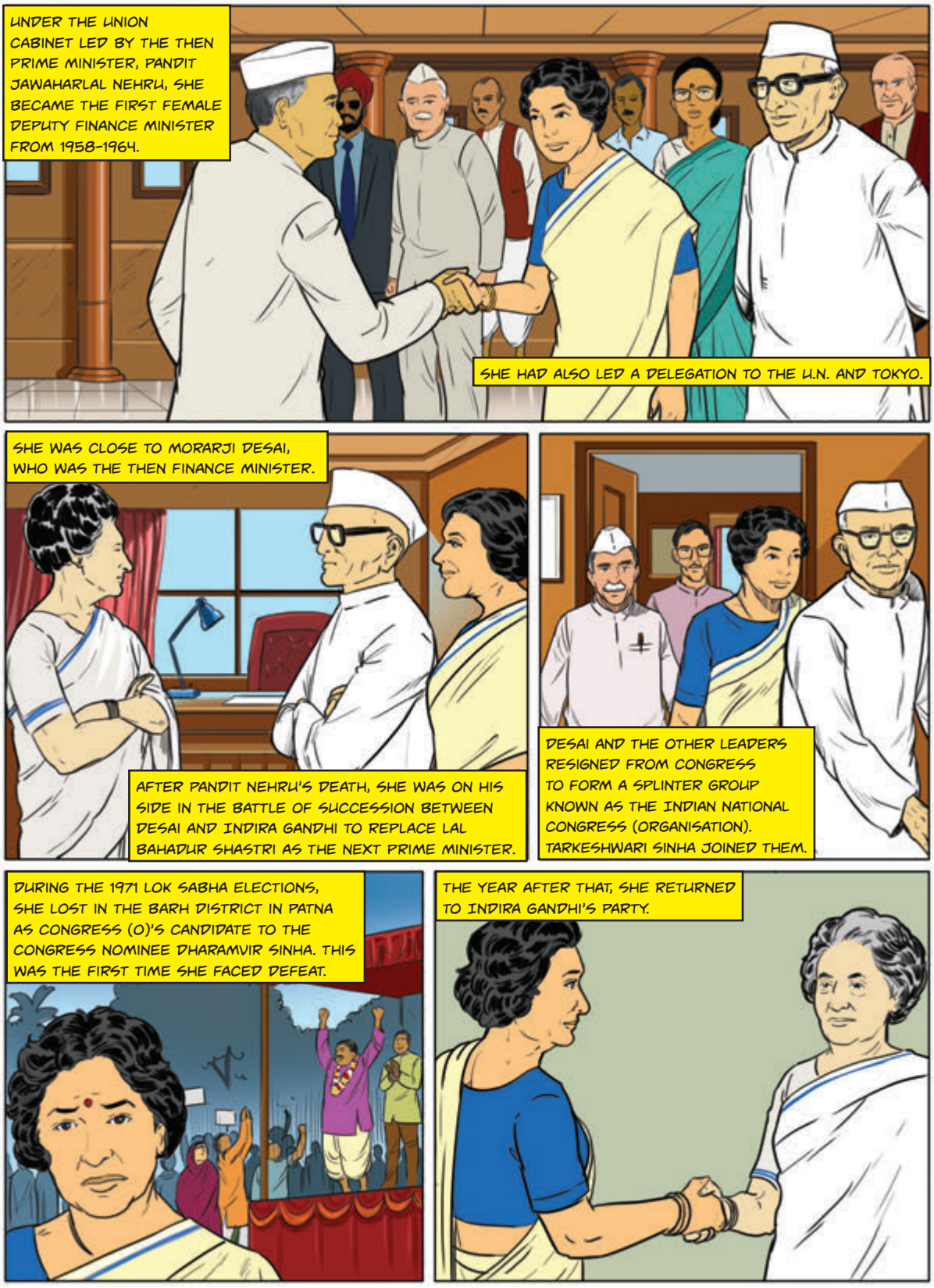

INDIA GAINED INDEPENDENCE IN 1947. AFTER THAT, PARBATI WENT BACK TO COMPLETE HER SCHOOLING AT THE PRAYAG MAHILA VIDYAPITH IN PRAYAGRAJ IN 1950.
IN 1954, SHE WENT BACK TO RAMA DEVI TO ASSIST HER IN HER RELIEF WORK.
A YEAR AFTER THAT, IN 1955, SHE ASSOCIATED HERSELF WITH AN AMERICAN PROJECT THAT AIMED AT IMPROVING THE PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE SAMBALPUR DISTRICT.
SHE ALSO STARTED THE KASTURBA GANDHI MATRUNIKETAN, AN ASHRAM FOR WOMEN AND ORPHANS, IN THE BARGARH DISTRICT.
FURTHERMORE, SHE STARTED ANOTHER HOME, DR SANTRA BAL NIKETAN FOR THE DESTITUTE AT BIRASINGH GAR IN THE SAMBALPUR DISTRICT.
APART FROM THAT, SHE ALSO WORKED TOWARDS IMPROVING JAILS AND ERADICATING LEPROSY.
HER WORK WAS APPRECIATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA WHO AWARDED HER WITH A PRIZE IN 1984.

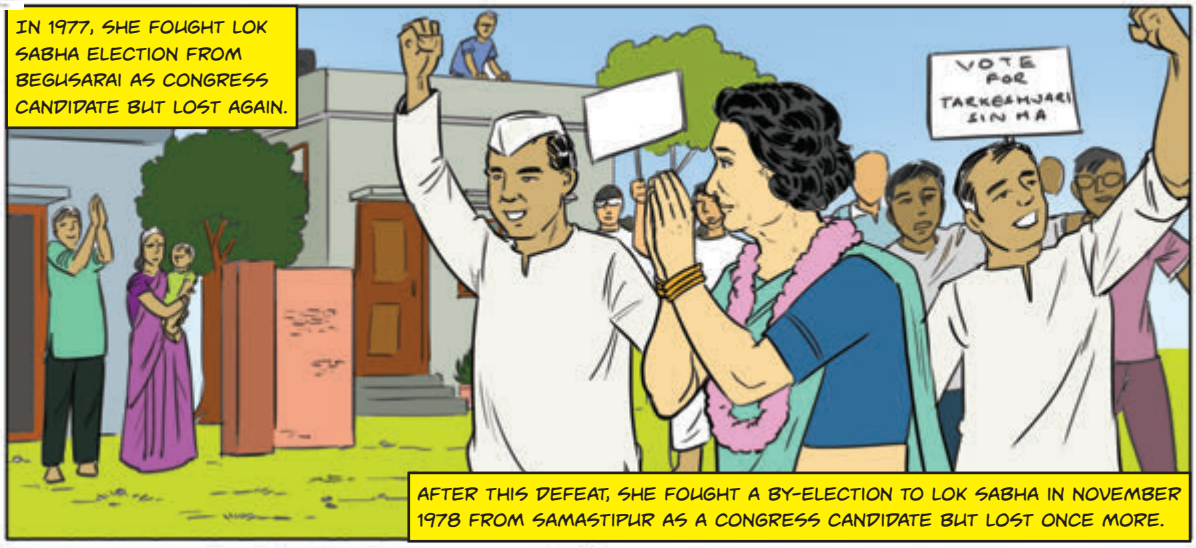


*A MOVEMENT THAT AIMED AT PERSUADING WEALTHY LANDOWNERS TO VOLUNTARILY GIVE A PERCENTAGE OF THEIR LAND TO LANDLESS PEOPLE.

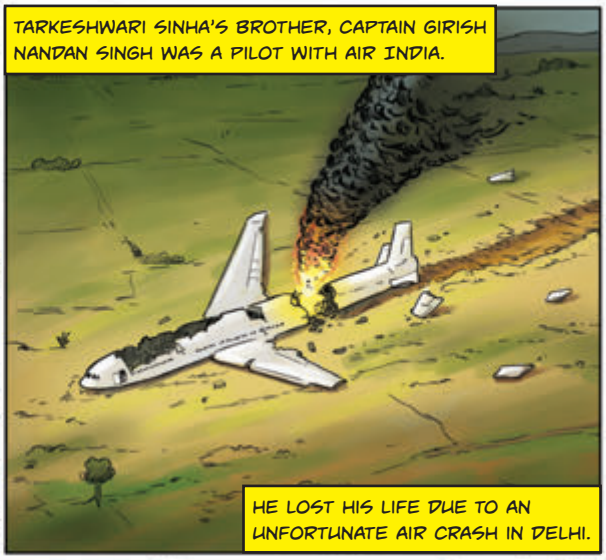
Tarkeshwari Sinha

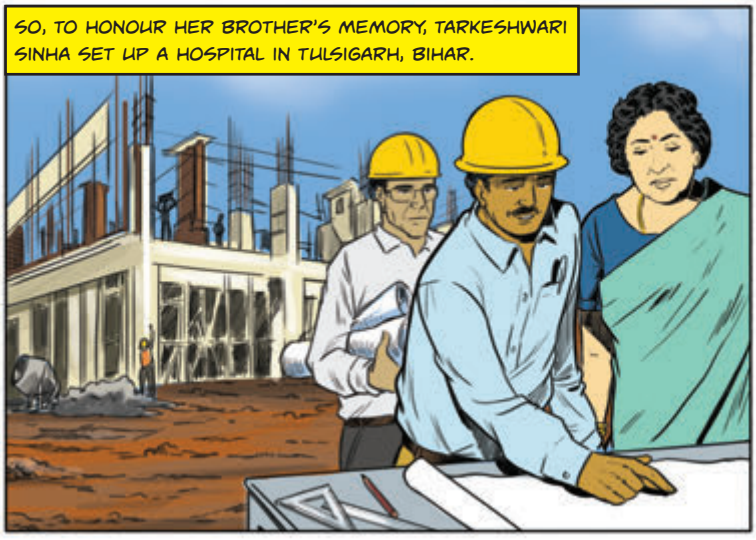

AFTER RETURNING FROM LONDON, SHE BECAME AN INDEPENDENT ACTIVIST.
स्वदेशी अपनाओ!
SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT.
AFTER INDEPENDENCE, IN 1952, THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS WERE TAKING PLACE.
चुनाव 1952
BALLOT BOX
THERE WAS EXCITEMENT ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY.
TARKESHWARI SINHA, WHO WAS ONLY 26 THEN, WAS GIVEN A TICKET BY THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS TO CONTEST FROM THE PATNA EAST CONSTITUENCY.
SHE WON THAT ELECTION!
SHE WAS BRAVE AND CAREFREE. SHE WOULD BOMBARD HER FELLOW MINISTERS WITH TONS OF QUESTIONS.
AT THE SLIGHTEST INSTANCE OF PROTEST, SHE WOULD CHIP IN WITH POINTS OF ORDER.
SHE WAS DILIGENT AT HER JOB WHICH IS WHY, THROUGH THE CONGRESS PARTY, SHE GOT RE-ELECTED IN 1957, 1962 AND 1967.


UNDER THE UNION CABINET LED BY THE THEN PRIME MINISTER, PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, SHE BECAME THE FIRST FEMALE DEPUTY FINANCE MINISTER FROM 1958-1964.
SHE HAD ALSO LED A DELEGATION TO THE U.N. AND TOKYO.
SHE WAS CLOSE TO MORARJI DESAI, WHO WAS THE THEN FINANCE MINISTER.
AFTER PANDIT NEHRU'S DEATH, SHE WAS ON HIS SIDE IN THE BATTLE OF SUCCESSION BETWEEN DESAI AND INDIRA GANDHI TO REPLACE LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI AS THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER.
DESAI AND THE OTHER LEADERS RESIGNED FROM CONGRESS TO FORM A SPLINTER GROUP KNOWN AS THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ORGANISATION). TARKESHWARI SINHA JOINED THEM.
DURING THE 1971 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS, SHE LOST IN THE BARH DISTRICT IN PATNA AS CONGRESS (O)'S CANDIDATE TO THE CONGRESS NOMINEE DHARAMVIR SINHA. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SHE FACED DEFEAT.
THE YEAR AFTER THAT, SHE RETURNED TO INDIRA GANDHI'S PARTY.

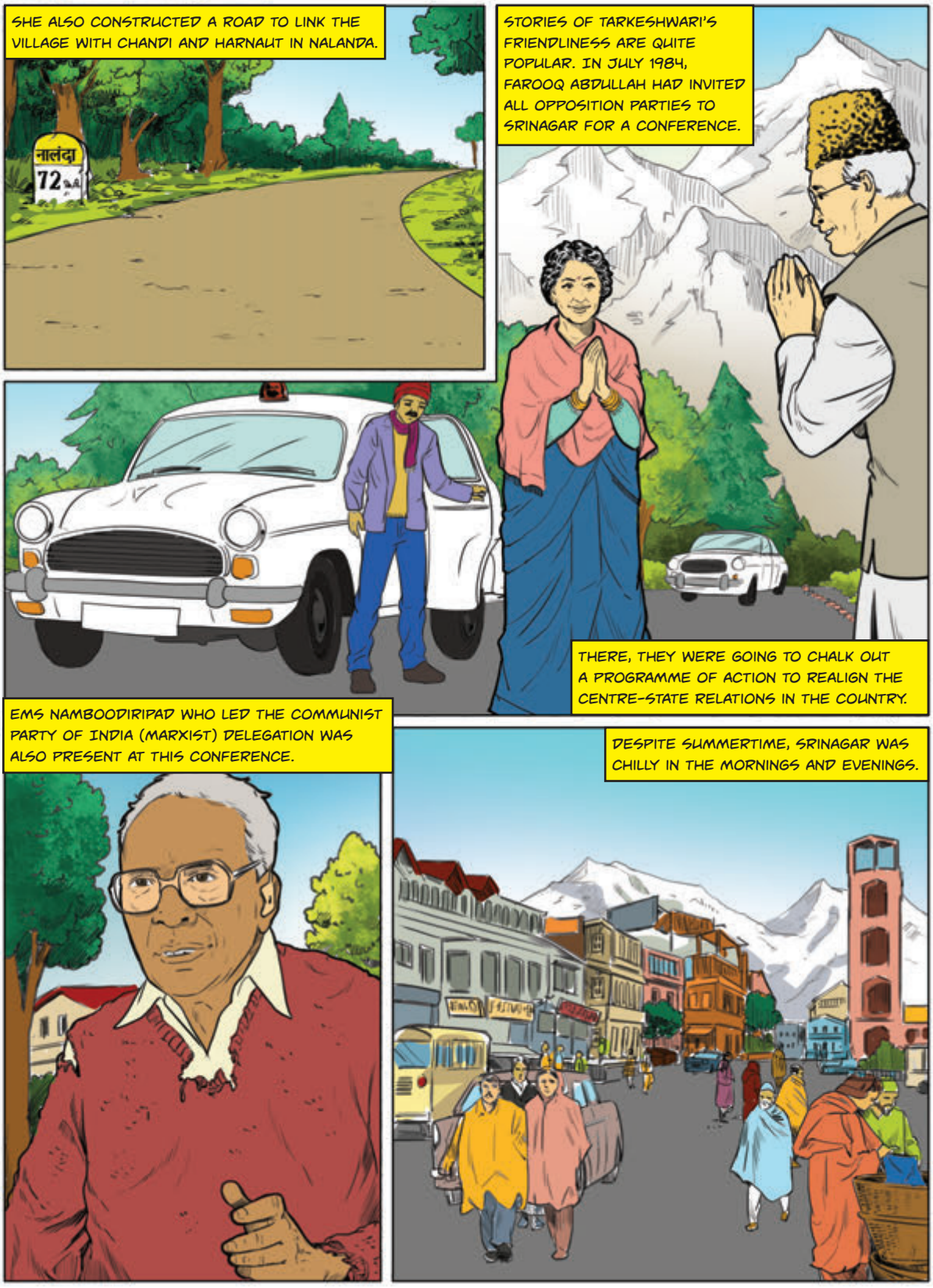

IN 1977, SHE FOUGHT LOK SABHA ELECTION FROM BEGUSARAI AS CONGRESS CANDIDATE BUT LOST AGAIN.
VOTE FOR TARKESHWARI SINHA
AFTER THIS DEFEAT, SHE FOUGHT A BY-ELECTION TO LOK SABHA IN NOVEMBER 1978 FROM SAMASTIPUR AS A CONGRESS CANDIDATE BUT LOST ONCE MORE.

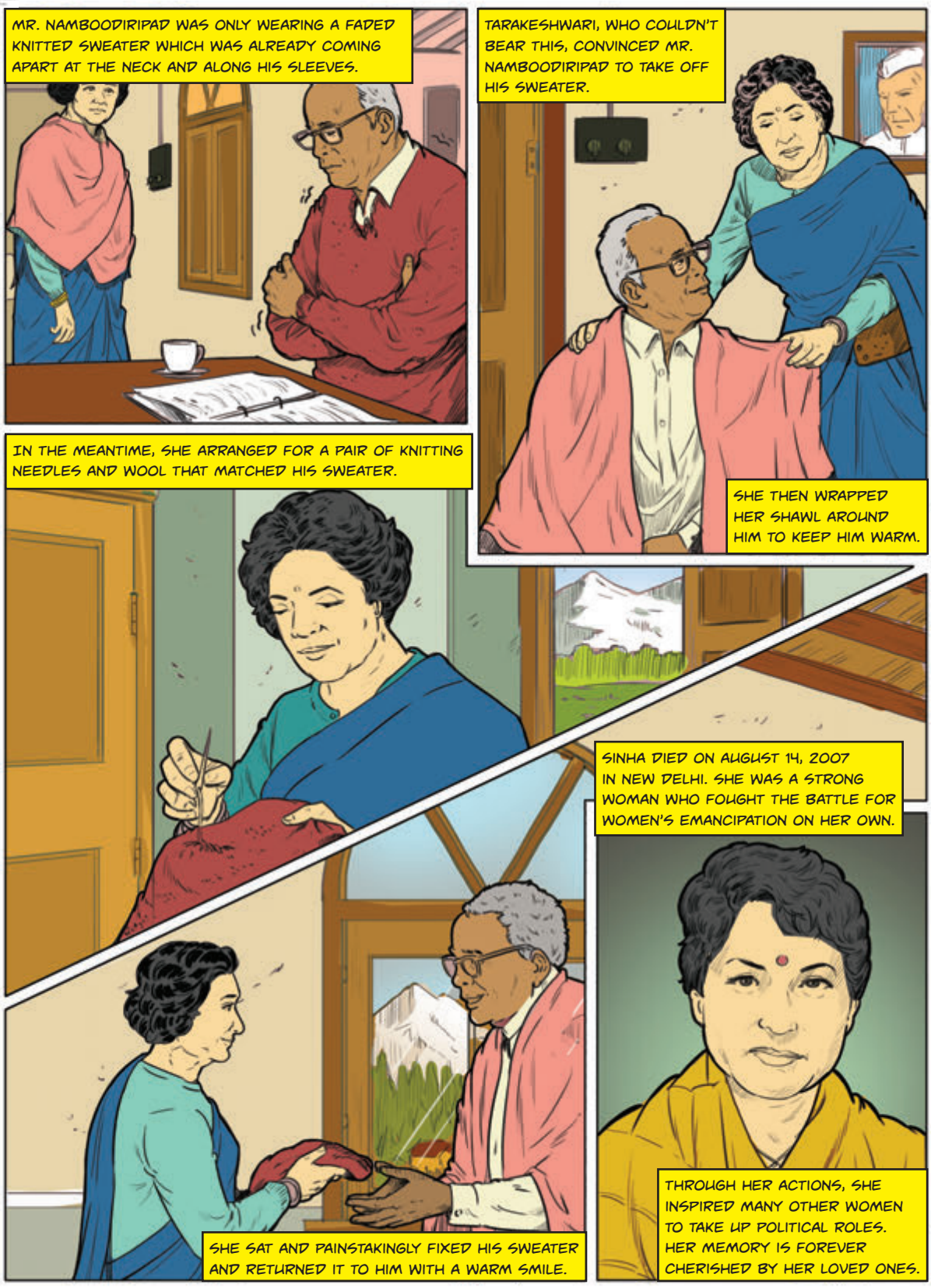
EVENTUALLY, SHE RETIRED FROM POLITICS AND INVESTED ALL HER TIME AND ENERGY INTO SOCIAL WORK.


TARKESHWARI SINHA'S BROTHER, CAPTAIN GIRISH NANDAN SINGH WAS A PILOT WITH AIR INDIA.
HE LOST HIS LIFE DUE TO AN UNFORTUNATE AIR CRASH IN DELHI.

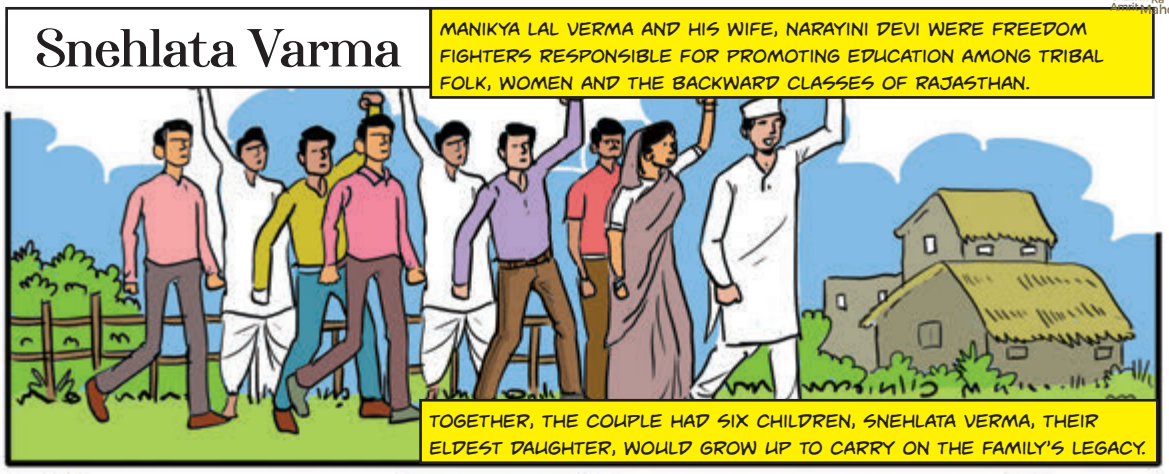

SO, TO HONOUR HER BROTHER'S MEMORY, TARKESHWARI SINHA SET UP A HOSPITAL IN TULSIGARH, BIHAR.

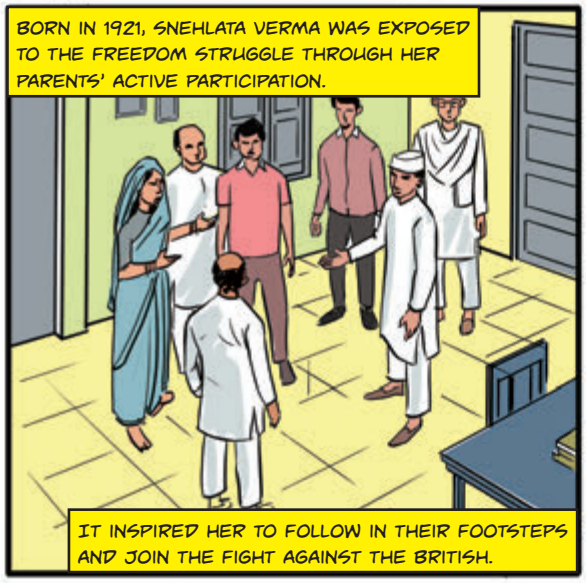
TO CONSTRUCT IT, SHE RAISED ALMOST RS. 25 LAKH, A BIG SUM AT THAT TIME.
THE FINAL OUTCOME WAS A TWO-FLOORED HOSPITAL WHERE TREATMENT WAS ALMOST FREE.

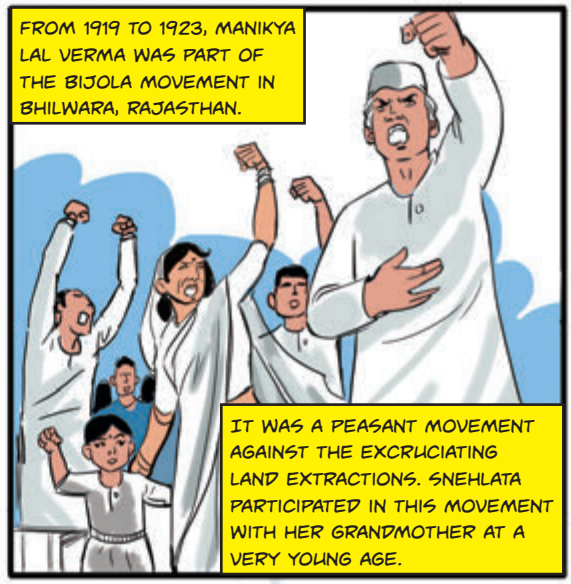

SHE ALSO CONSTRUCTED A ROAD TO LINK THE VILLAGE WITH CHANDI AND HARNAUT IN NALANDA.
नालंदा
72
STORIES OF TARKESHWARI'S FRIENDLINESS ARE QUITE POPULAR. IN JULY 1984, FAROOQ ABDULLAH HAD INVITED ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES TO SRINAGAR FOR A CONFERENCE.
THERE, THEY WERE GOING TO CHALK OUT A PROGRAMME OF ACTION TO REALIGN THE CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS IN THE COUNTRY.
EMS NAMBOODIRIPAD WHO LED THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST) DELEGATION WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THIS CONFERENCE.
DESPITE SUMMERTIME, SRINAGAR WAS CHILLY IN THE MORNINGS AND EVENINGS.

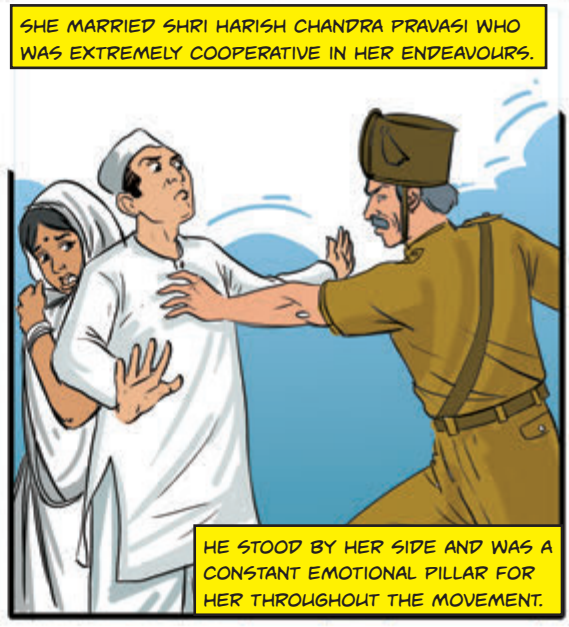

MR. NAMBOODIRIPAD WAS ONLY WEARING A FADED KNITTED SWEATER WHICH WAS ALREADY COMING APART AT THE NECK AND ALONG HIS SLEEVES.
TARAKESHWARI, WHO COULDN'T BEAR THIS, CONVINCED MR. NAMBOODIRIPAD TO TAKE OFF HIS SWEATER.
SHE THEN WRAPPED HER SHAWL AROUND HIM TO KEEP HIM WARM.
IN THE MEANTIME, SHE ARRANGED FOR A PAIR OF KNITTING NEEDLES AND WOOL THAT MATCHED HIS SWEATER.
SINHA DIED ON AUGUST 14, 2007 IN NEW DELHI. SHE WAS A STRONG WOMAN WHO FOUGHT THE BATTLE FOR WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION ON HER OWN.
SHE SAT AND PAINSTAKINGLY FIXED HIS SWEATER AND RETURNED IT TO HIM WITH A WARM SMILE.
THROUGH HER ACTIONS, SHE INSPIRED MANY OTHER WOMEN TO TAKE UP POLITICAL ROLES. HER MEMORY IS FOREVER CHERISHED BY HER LOVED ONES.

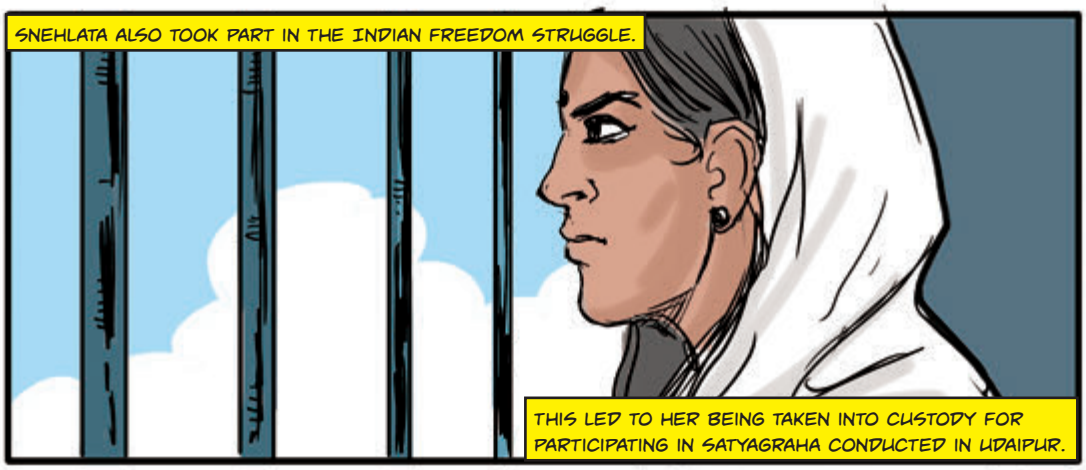
Snehlata Varma





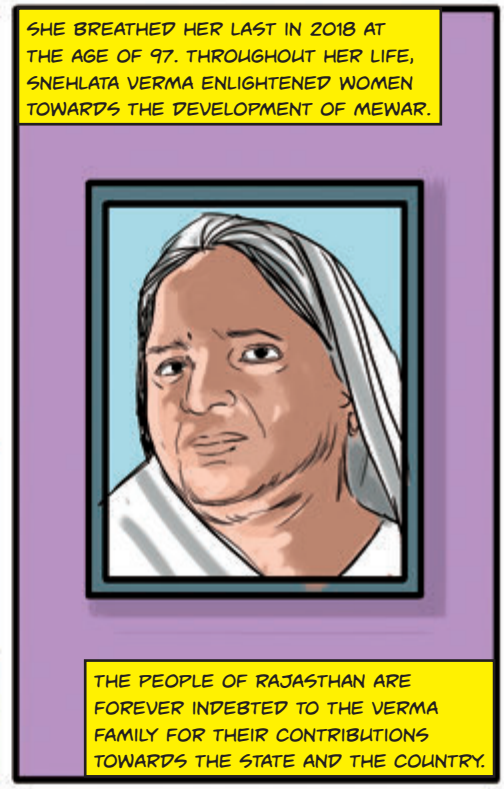




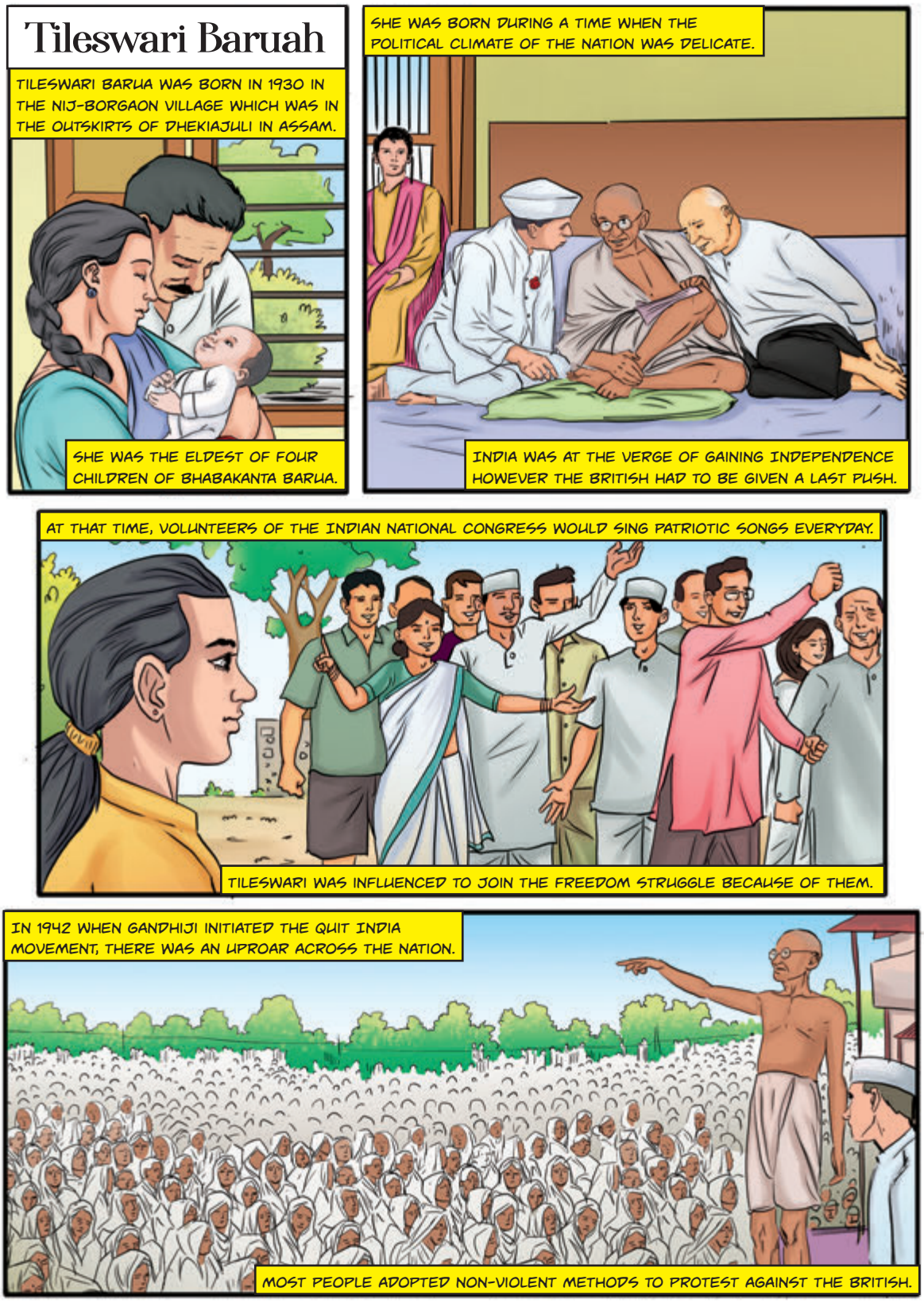

SNEHLATA ALSO TOOK PART IN THE INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
THIS LED TO HER BEING TAKEN INTO CUSTODY FOR PARTICIPATING IN SATYAGRAHA CONDUCTED IN UDAIPUR.

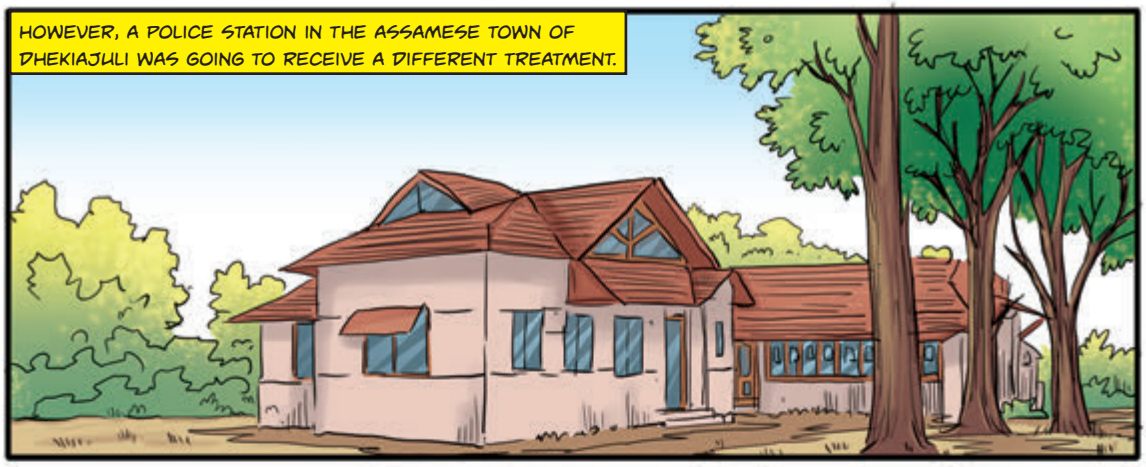
THE VERMA FAMILY EXTENDED THEIR HELP TO OTHER OPPRESSED FACTIONS OF SOCIETY.
HER MOTHER, NARAYINI DEVI VERMA ESTABLISHED THE 'MAHILA SANGATHAN'; IT SERVED AS A PLATFORM TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN TO JOIN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT.

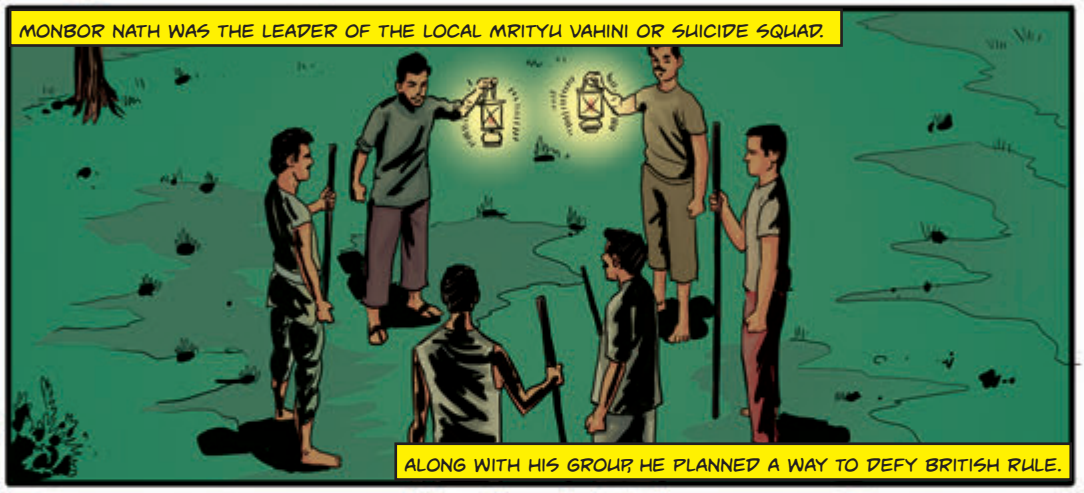
SNEHLATA BECAME AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ORGANISATION WHERE SHE DID A LOT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN.


SHE BREATHED HER LAST IN 2018 AT THE AGE OF 97. THROUGHOUT HER LIFE, SNEHLATA VERMA ENLIGHTENED WOMEN TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEWAR.
THE PEOPLE OF RAJASTHAN ARE FOREVER INDEBTED TO THE VERMA FAMILY FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE STATE AND THE COUNTRY.

Tileswari Baruah




HOWEVER, A POLICE STATION IN THE ASSAMESE TOWN OF DHEKIAJULI WAS GOING TO RECEIVE A DIFFERENT TREATMENT.


MONBOR NATH WAS THE LEADER OF THE LOCAL MRITYU VAHINI OR SUICIDE SQUAD.
ALONG WITH HIS GROUP, HE PLANNED A WAY TO DEFY BRITISH RULE.

ON 20 SEPTEMBER, 1942, HE LED A GROUP IN A PROCESSION TOWARDS THE DHEKIAJULI POLICE STATION.
THE PLAN WAS TO PLANT THE TRICOLOUR ATOP THE BUILDING.

TILESWARI BARUA NOTICED THE PROCESSION GOING AND DECIDED THAT THIS WAS HER CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE.
WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT, SHE JOINED MONBOR NATH AND HIS GANG.

AT THE POLICE STATION, A POLICE OFFICER TRIED TO DISPERSE THE CROWD AND WARNED MONBOR NATH TO BACK DOWN.
BUT MONBOR NATH WAS DETERMINED.
HE DEFIED THE OFFICER'S ORDERS AND CLIMBED ATOP THE POLICE STATION.
WITHIN SECONDS, HE WAS SHOT DOWN BY THE POLICE OFFICER.
THIS ENRAGED THE OTHER VOLUNTEERS AND THEY FOLLOWED SUIT.
ONE BY ONE, THEY WERE ALL SHOT DOWN.
DESPITE THE BLOODSHED, THE VOLUNTEERS DIDN'T BACK DOWN.

AFTER MONBOR NATH, KUMOLI DEVI, AND MOHIRAM KOCH, TILESWARI WAS THE FOURTH TO BE HIT BY THE BULLET.
AND WITH THAT ONE BULLET, TILESWARI BARUA SACRIFICED HER LIFE FOR THE NATION.
AT THE AGE OF 12 WHEN OTHER CHILDREN WERE PLAYING AND STUDYING, TILESWARI BARUA WAS THINKING LIKE A FREEDOM FIGHTER.
FOR HER VALIANT EFFORTS, THE DHEKIAJULI TOWN IN SONITPUR DISTRICT OBSERVES SEPTEMBER 20 AS MARTYRS' DAY.

Ministry of Culture
Government of India

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

INDIA'S WOMEN UNSUNG HEROES

Forgotten Women Freedom Fighters

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Read the stories of queens who battled colonial powers in the struggle against imperial rule and women who dedicated and even laid down their lives for the cause of the motherland.

As we celebrate 75 years of India's independence, we bring you stories of women forgotten by time, but who's contribution to our freedom movement can no longer be ignored.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA